BUSINESS / B4

Up to 8-hour outages hit Mindanao

By Amy R. Remo

CEBU CITY—THE POWER SUPPLY shortage in Mindanao has worsened, surging to 355 megawatts (MW) yesterday from 210 MW last week, according to National Grid Corp. of the Philippines (NGCP).

Except for Davao City, which has enough power supply, a number of provinces on the island experienced four-to-six-hour rotating brownouts. The outages lasted up to eight hours in other

UP TO A1

BUSINESS / B1

Meralco posts 169% surge in '09 net profit to P7B

Gov't raises $1.1B from Japan bond float

WORLD / A26

Nato commander says sorry to Afghans

METRO / A23

Hayden Kho files final plea

NEWS / A2

Award of medals to captors of 'Morong 43' hit

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Wednesday, February 24, 2010 ★★ Tuesday / Vol. 23 / No. 72 P18

How rumor of Lacson's arrest leaps across seas

By Christine O. Avendaño and Jeannette I. Andrade

THIS IS HOW A RUMOR starts.

Very early Sunday morning a Filipino with a name that sounded

HOW RUMOR A3

GMA execs told quit now

SOMEONE TO WATCH OVER RP The Philippine flag flies free in the wind in front of the towering brass statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary at the Edsa Shrine, once part of the site of the 4-day peaceful People Power revolt, which resonated and inspired countries around the world to break free of their chains 24 years ago. RAFFY LERMA

Palace set to appeal high court decision

By Kristine L. Alave and Christine O. Avendaño

QUIT NOW OR FACE LEGAL hassles later.

Commission on Elections Chair Jose Melo issued this advice a day after the Supreme Court declared that appointed officials running in the May 10 elections were deemed resigned when they filed their certificates of candidacy.

"If I were a candidate, I will just resign to avoid the hassle," Melo said in a news briefing yesterday.

He added that those officials had enjoyed nonstop campaigning since October last year, and it was only proper that they stepped down from office. He reminded the candidates that "right now, we are under the old system."

Court spokesperson Midas Marquez on Monday said the decision was effective immediately but yesterday he invited the parties in the case to file a motion for clarification.

"There seems to be confusion on whether the decision is immediately executory; it's actually an unusual case," he said.

Reversing its Dec. 1 decision, the high tribunal on Monday upheld the election law that deems appointive officials resigned from office once they turn in their certificates of candidacy under the Omnibus Election Code.

In its Dec. 1 decision, the court ruled that this provision was unconstitutional and discriminatory.

Romulo Macalintal, counsel for the petitioners—Environment Undersecretary Eleanor Dolreo and Director Gerino Tolentino—said he would file a motion for reconsideration within 15

CABINET A8

4 DAYS OF EDSA I

'The Filipino is worth crying for'

YELLOW OFF HAND Brause directed the AP coverage of the Edsa I.

By David Brizee
Contributor

SOME MEMORIES HAVE FADED from those days 24 years ago this month when I directed The Associated Press' coverage of the Edsa People Power Revolution against Ferdinand Marcos.

COMMENTARY

But the night of Feb. 23, 1986, after four days and nights without sleep, trying to keep up with unfolding historic events that would have such an impact on the Philippines and the world, I had finally found the chance to rest.

I returned exhausted to the Manila Hilton hotel room rented for my Filipino journalist wife, the former Leonor Aurrua, and our four young children—Jebero, Maura, Babi and Maya.

Turned at Manila International Airport, near our home in Tambo, Parañaque, brought fear for their safety. Who knew if the city was going to burn or blow up in a country with dual dueling presidents?

But at that moment, when I returned to the Hilton, Ferdinand Mar-

THE FILIPINO A10

Yellow ballot boxes out; black plastic in

By Kristine L. Alave

SAY GOODBYE TO THE ICONIC YELlow ballot boxes.

The steel ballot boxes, which witnessed much of the Philippines' bloody election history, will be decommissioned when Filipinos vote for their new batch of leaders on May 10.

The Commission on Elections (Comelec) yesterday unveiled the black ballot boxes that will be used in the automated national elections in May saying they will be harder to steal than the yellow metal boxes used in the past.

Election Commissioner Gregorio

YELLOW A11

Not 1, but 4 'euro generals' seeking office

By Marlon Ramos

NOT ONE BUT FOUR "EURO GENERals" have thrown their hats into the political ring.

Undeterred by the scandal triggered by their being held at the Moscow International Airport on Oct. 31, 2008, for having P6.9 million worth of euros in their possession, the retired police officials are seeking elective posts in May.

They are Alberto Alamia, Jaime Caringal, Ismael Rafanan and Eliseo de la Paz, the then comptroller of the Philippine National Police who was

NOT IT A11

JC 'concedes' presidency to Noynoy

By DJ Yap

THE WAY IT SOUNDED, OLONGAPO Councilor John Carlos "JC" de los Reyes had conceded the presidency to Sen. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III.

"Senator Aquino, there is a big chance that you will be the next president based on what the surveys are saying now. And I want you to succeed," De los Reyes told the Liberal Party (LP) standard-bearer in his parting remarks at the 2nd Integrity and Human Rights Conference yesterday at Hotel InterContinental Manila.

De los Reyes' statement elicited a surprised buzz from the audience.

When it was Aquino's turn to speak, he drew laughter when he started off with: "Thank you to Councilor JC for acknowledging that I have a good chance of running this country."

But De los Reyes, the standard-bearer

JC VS TALLY A10

SURPRISE BUZZ Presidential contenders Jamby Madrigal, JC de los Reyes and Noynoy Aquino at the Second Integrity and Human Rights Conference. De los Reyes stirs the audience when he seems to endorse Aquino. BEN CAMACHO

Institutionalized corruption next president's big challenge

By Philip C. Tubeza and DJ Yap

OLD HABITS DIE HARD.

The incoming President will face a tremendous challenge in stamping out corruption with corrupt practices having been institutionalized in the Philippines, an official of Transparency International (TI) said yesterday.

Speaking before the Second Integrity and Human Rights Forum in Bhakti City, Samantha Grant, program coordinator for TI-Southeast Asia, also warned that "overdependental journalism," or payoffs, had become "prevalent in the run up to elections."

"Any new government has a tremendous challenge to win back the respect of the people. To do this, they must tackle the institutionalization of practices currently accepted that are, in a word, corrupt," Grant said.

The forum was organized by the

INSTITUTIONALIZED A11

Second FRONTPAGE

WEATHER FORECAST

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Kalayaan	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Masbate	Partly Cloudy
Dagupan City	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu, Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Legaspi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Catarman	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Partly Cloudy

Lotto results

EZ2	9 30 18 13 7 13
SUPER 6/55	7 1 6 8 4 5 7 0 3
SIX DIGIT	3 6 1 7 2 7
6/42 LUZ ANS MIN	1 9 10 15 18 40 P22,497,908.40
SUPER LOTTO 6/49	8 16 24 25 28 44 P35,069,720.40

Award of medals to AFP officers hit

'Something wrong with citing captors of Morong 43'

By Michael Lim Ubac and Alexis Pope

SENATORS PIA CAYETANO AND JAMBY MADRIGAL yesterday cried foul over the awarding of Bronze Cross Medals to military officers involved in the controversial arrest and detention of 43 health workers attending a seminar in Morong, Rizal, early this month.

"There's something seriously wrong when a government institution commends its personnel for committing an illegal act," said Cayetano in a statement.

Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Chief of Staff Gen. Victor Ibrado was in Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon, Quezon, yesterday to pin the medals on the two lead officers of the Morong raid: Col. Ariel Rabadal of the Army's 202nd Brigade and Lt. Col. Julius Ahoneng, commander of the 16th Infantry Battalion.

"I'm appalled at how the military keeps maneuvering that (mere) membership or affiliation with the CPP/NPA [Communist Party of the Philippines/New People's Army] constitutes a crime," Cayetano said.

Cayetano, who is seeking reelection in May, reminded Malacañang and the military that the Anti-Subversion Law had long been repealed.

Madrigal, a lawyer in a leftist organization in itself is not a crime. What is punished is the act of rebellion or overthrowing the government through violent means and other acts defined in the Revised Penal Code.

In the case of the "Morong 43," no gunfight or military encounter took place, Cayetano noted.

Military arrogance

Madrigal joined Cayetano and militant groups in slamming the military's "arrogant behavior."

"It is an insult to human rights victims and a clear case of arrogant conduct on the part of the Armed Forces of the Philippines," said Madrigal.

The independent presidential candidate yesterday pointed out that the arrest of the 43 health workers was still being questioned in the Court of Appeals. "It is also being investigated by the Commission on Human Rights, the Red Cross and other interested groups," she said.

"This is what happens when the military considers itself above civilian jurisdiction and even our court is of less," Madrigal said.

Makabayan senatorial candidate Rep. Satur Ocampo also issued a statement expressing outrage over the award of medals to the army officers responsible for "arresting and violating the rights of the Morong 43.

"It is clear that the AFP wants to project impunity and defiance against the widespread condemnation it is facing due to its continued detention of the Morong 43," said Ocampo.

Other statements of protest were issued by family members of the detained health workers, and nongovernment religious and health organizations.

Shamed Villadeo of the Promotion for Church People's Response said their allies in the United States would ask US representatives to withhold military aid to the Philippines.

Dr. Geneve Rivera, secretary general of Health Alliance for Democracy, said the military was giving health professionals an other reason to leave the country.

But Ibrado defended the award of medals to the officers.

Ibrado: File cases

He challenged critics to file charges against military officers and soldiers alleged to have tortured any of the detainees.

Ibrado said the allegations of torture and mistreatment by the military were just that.

"They (supporters) owe the state, if they want. As of now, they cannot prove allegations of torture because there really wasn't any torture," Ibrado told reporters on arrival at Camp Aguinaldo after the medal rites.

Ibrado said the detainees, particularly the women, were treated well, Prensico officials took charge of the women detainees," Ibrado said to Filipinos.

Commission on Human Rights (CHR) Chair Leila de Lima said she was ready to call Ibrado's challenge.

She said the CHR would issue an order within the week directing the military to answer allegations that it was illegally detaining the 43 health workers. *With reports from Leila Salaverria and Jerry E. Esplanada*

Shell posts P7-B bond in tax case

By Amy R. Nunez

PILIPINAS SHELL PETROLEUM Corp. has posted a P7.35-billion surety bond with the Court of Tax Appeals to serve as security for an alleged tax deficiency assessed against it by the Bureau of Customs.

Shell, which supplies nearly 20 percent of the local petroleum market, said the posting of the bond would now allow it to again import products and raw materials and minimize the supply disruption resulting from its inability to import these products for the past two months.

The BOC claimed that Shell owed P7.35 billion in unpaid excise taxes which the oil company has refused to pay, claiming that imported raw materials for its fuel refinery operations should not be subjected to excise taxes.

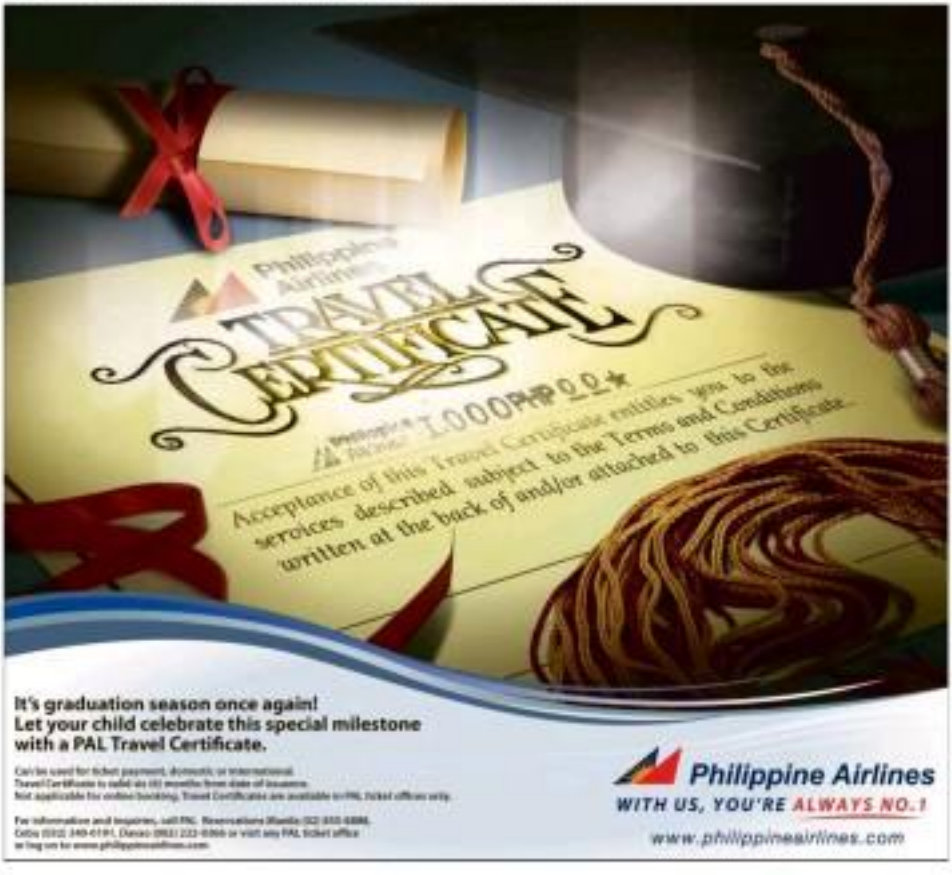
The bureau had threatened to seize Shell's oil imports to offset its alleged tax liability but the oil company was able to obtain a temporary court order against it.

The government, through Solicitor General Alberto C. Agra, has since accepted Shell's counterproposal to post a bond in lieu of cash to secure the claim of the BOC in the event that a final court judgment would be rendered against Shell in the tax case.

The acceptance of Shell's bond offer was the outcome of talks between Shell and the executive branch to both amend in favor an oil shortage because of the BOC's threat to seize Shell's oil imports.

In a Feb. 19 letter to Shell, Agra and the Department of Finance, the BOC's parent agency, was accepting the oil company's surety bond offer "owing to the undoubtable paramount public interest involved."

With the posting of the bond, Agra said the BOC would not be seizing Shell's importations pending the resolution of the case before the Court of Tax Appeals and the issue of Shell's tax liability is finally resolved.



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SC: GMA can run for Congress

THE SUPREME COURT HAS PAVED THE way for President Macapagal-Arroyo's unprecedented run for a congressional seat in her home province of Pampanga.

The high court on banc yesterday issued a seismic resolution that nearly nullified the Commission on Elections' "did not commit any grave abuse of discretion" when it threw out Makabayan party-list Rep. Rafa Montinola's petition to disqualify Ms Arroyo from running for representative of Pampanga's second district in the May elections.

Court spokesperson Midas Marquez said the high tribunal did not issue a full court resolution on Montinola's appeal to reverse the Comelec 2nd Division ruling that allowed a situation where an incumbent president is running for a lower office.

He said it was "within the discretion of the high court" not to come out with a full resolution.

Marquez also cited the urgency of carrying out with a decision quickly with the elections just around the corner.

"As much as possible we don't want some issues left hanging for those running for office," he said.

Abalos[illegible], who is running for senator under the Liberal Party, brought her disqualification petition against Ms Arroyo to the Supreme Court without waiting for the Comelec en banc to decide on her petition against the 2nd Division ruling.

She argued that the Comelec en banc's final decision on a matter of "transcendental importance" might come too late as the campaign period for local elections will end on March 29.

She claimed that the Comelec 2nd Division committed grave abuse of discretion when it ruled that Ms Arroyo was not prohibited by the Constitution from running for a lower position. She cited Section 4 Article VII of the Constitution which prohibits the President from running for "reelection."

"We believe that provision makes two prohibitions...an absolute ban on any reelection for an incumbent president and a prohibition on reelection for the presidency against an individual who succeeded as president and who has served as such for more than four years," she said in her petition.

Asked if the Supreme Court was not in fact setting a precedent for future presidents who would run for lower offices after their term, Marquez said: If we're going to use this [reliance resolutions] as basis, that is the implications. (Nestle E. Pizarro/Inquirer)

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Gibo: I stand, fall on loyalty to GMA, party

By Fe Zamora and TJ Burgonio

DISMISSING SUGGESTIONS THAT HIS vow to run unopposed for president was weighing down his campaign, Lakas-Kampi-CMD standard bearer Gilberto "Gibo" Teodoro yesterday said he would not turn his back on President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"Hindi, hindi," Gibo, 51, Teodoro told radio-TV anchor Alber Bautista on DzIQ's "Hoy na Ito! The Presidential Interview" series.

"I took my oath as chair of Lakas-Kampi-CMD. I am running as standard bearer of Lakas-Kampi-CMD. I will stand and I will fall on that."

"What will the people think if I disavow my party loyalty for personal motives?" Teodoro said.

The former defense secretary also dismissed as "political rhetoric" gossip talk that Sen. Manuel Villar was actually Ms Arroyo's candidate for president. "I'm not in unison. I am the candidate...I don't have to talk to the President about this," he said.

But Teodoro also said that if elected, he would not interfere in court cases that may be filed against Ms Arroyo and her husband.

"I can't meddle with that. I will not make a move either way (for or against) because the people will be watching," he said in Filipino.

"I will serve for six years. When I step down, if I win, I will be 57 years old. I have a long life ahead of me. Ayokong alisin ang isang taon ng mga kabuhayan natin [I wouldn't want our countrymen spitting on me]," he said.

His decision to leave his original party, the Nacionalista People's Coalition (NPC), founded by his uncle, would be "instrumental," Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco, was another matter, he said.

"I changed parties because I had been entering the nationalista fold for two years. I wanted to prove to myself that even without any help from relatives I can achieve my political goals," he said.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Wednesday, February 24, 2010
1st Week of Lent

1st Reading: Jon 3:1-10
Gospel: Lk 11:29-32

At the crowds increased, Jesus began to speak to this age, "People of this present time are evil people. They ask for a sign, but no sign will be given to them except the sign of Jonah. As Jonah became a sign for the people of Nineveh, so will the Son of Man be a sign for this generation. The Queen of the South will rise upon Judgment Day with the people of this time and condemn them, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and here there is greater than Solomon. The people of Nineveh will rise up on Judgment Day with this people of this generation and condemn them, for Jonah's preaching made them turn from their sins, and here there is greater than Jonah."

Commentary:

The judgment [on the people of Nineveh] will stand up and accuse you, because they turned from their sins when they heard Jonah preach and I assure you that there is something here greater than Jonah.

Old Songs remembered from Our Country,
Mga Awit sa Ibon ng Kanyang Bayan,
Mga Awit sa Ibon ng Kanyang Bayan,
that life is meant for greater things,
that we have already seen it in the lives
of those holy ones among us
Mga Awit sa Ibon ng Kanyang Bayan,
Mga Awit sa Ibon ng Kanyang Bayan,
Ang Awit sa Ibon ng Kanyang Bayan,
Ang Awit sa Ibon ng Kanyang Bayan,
Ang

Definitely no hero's burial for Marcos, says Aquino

By GMC Cabacungan Jr.

LIBERAL PARTY PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE Sen. Benigno Aquino III has unequivocally rejected the idea of allowing a state and hero's burial for the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos which his rival, Nacionalista Party standard bearer Manuel Villar, is supportive of.

"I would like to apologize to the relatives and those who love Mr. Marcos but we officially the memories of his long years in office (from 1965 to 1986). What has he done that is so special that makes him deserving to be buried at the LI Imagining orga thereof?" said Aquino.

In an interview with reporters following a Makati forum, Aquino said the country continued to suffer from problems that were created under Marcos' rule and the promises he made that he wanted his body on.

"Why should we honor him by burying him at the Libingan ng mga Bayani?" he said.

Aquino said it was not surprising the NP would support a hero's burial for Marcos considering that his son, Presidential Jr., was on its senatorial slate.

In a press conference at LP headquarters, Aquino campaign manager Florencio Abad Jr. said that while the issue of a hero's burial was never discussed among the party's senatorial candidates, he said the LP had consistently opposed the idea.

"That is reserved for heroes and we do not consider that Marcos is a hero. We still have to find closure to many abuses our people suffered in terms of political repression, the conjugal hypocrisy and many others," said Abad.

Aquino said his family and supporters had celebrated the Edsa People Power Revolution of 1986 for the past 24 years because this has been the "defining moment of the country's departure from the dark ages."

"Those who are attacking Edsa and its ideals are actually helping us clarify the principles that we are fighting for," he said.

Aquino said he remained keen on upholding the quality of politics in the country by sticking to the issues and avoiding making personal attacks against his rivals.

I received offers but I can't be bought—Estrada

IBAAN, BATANGAS—IS ERS. MANNY VIL... he trying to buy out Erap?

Former President Joseph Estrada yesterday said another presidential candidate was offering to reimburse him for his campaign expenses in exchange for Estrada's withdrawing from the presidential race.

Estrada declined to identify the candidate, but JV Ejercito, a senatorial candidate of Estrada's party, said Villar was the "most likely person to do that."

"He is the most logical person to do it because the other political contenders do not have that kind of money to offer to Erap," Ejercito told reporters during a campaign sortie here.

Estrada said on summary of the presidential candidate had gone to his house on at least three occasions in the past nine months. He said during each visit—the most recent was two weeks ago—each offer was made for him not to run anymore.

Estrada said he told the emissary in Tagalog: "I never back down from a fight."

Estrada said he entrusted the presidential contender either considered him a major "threat" or wanted to ensure victory by getting his support. He acknowledged that a text message had circulated claiming that he was backing out and would support Villar's presidential bid. Ghe ichaw E Esguerra

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The Block - April 15 - 21
Glorietta 1 - April 23 - 25
Trinoma - April 30 - May 2
SM Pampanga - May 3 - 8
Ayala Cebu - May 21 - 23
SM Cebu - May 24 - 30
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the GSIS annual ART competition

Now on its 6th YEAR

The Government Service Insurance System believes in the Filipino artist and his invaluable role in shaping how the country thinks. For the sixth year, the GSIS is renewing its pledge to support artists all over the country through the Annual Art Competition, which aims to showcase the best paintings and sculptures of this generation. Beyond ensuring lives and property, the GSIS also insures national heritage, for a nation that carries its artists is a nation that carries itself forward.

The Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) is inviting Filipino artists to join the 2010 GSIS Art Competition. This year's competition has an open theme. The artist is encouraged to explore his best in presenting and conceptualizing his art entry. It is through this competition that we hope to view and produce diverse interpretations of what's inside an artist's mind. From the previous two (2) categories, this year, we have added the Sculpture Category in order to invite more artists to participate.

Official entry forms are available in all GSIS offices (Main Office, Regional Offices and Satellite Offices) and other offices and galleries starting February 22, 2010.

Please read all the mechanics, rules and regulations carefully. The GSIS shall be strict in the implementation of the guidelines set. Entries could be disqualified for technical reasons.

ENTRIES WITH INCOMPLETE REQUIREMENT WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED

CATEGORIES & ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

There will be three (3) categories for this year's competition:

i. Representational (any style, realistic, stylized (distorted figure), representational cubism, etc)

ii. Non-representational (abstract) i.e. purely non-representational, no recognizable figures and objects.

iii. Sculpture

The competition is open to all Filipino artists aged 18 years old (by April 17, 2010) and above. Participants can submit one entry per category. Therefore, each participant can submit one entry for representational, one entry for non-representational and one entry for sculpture. There is no participation fee.

The theme is open.

For the PAINTING categories, the required size is 3 feet x 4 feet (horizontal or vertical excluding frame) with 10 kilos allowable maximum weight (including frame).

4.1 All entries must be ready for hanging (museum wrap or box type is allowed).

4.2 The medium acceptable is only oil on canvas, acrylic on canvas or watercolor. Entry using collage, decoupage, assemblage or use of non-pigment based materials like paper, board, plastic metal, etc. IS NOT allowed. The entry must hang on a wall to qualify. Appropriate support, and/or equivalent devices should be provided to ensure the proper hanging of the artwork (ready for hanging). (For watercolor entries, any watercolor paper is allowed EXCEPT Illustration Board)

For SCULPTURE, the maximum size requirements are as follows:

Height: 72 inches,
Width: 36 inches and
Depth: 48 inches

5.1 Entries should not exceed 300 kilos.

5.2 Entries must be done in the generally accepted medium for sculpture such as Metal (steel, brass, copper, aluminum, et al); Hardwood (narra, mahogany, yakal, et al); Stone (marble, alabaster, granite, limestone, et al); Terracotta or stoneware (porcelain, ceramic, et al); Resin and other durable sculpture media.

The entry must be dated not earlier than 2010 must be his/her original work, and must not have been exhibited before nor received nor awarded a prize in another contest.

The entry painting or sculpture **MUST BE SIGNED** but must be covered with masking tape prior to submission, to conceal the artist's identity. It must also be properly labeled at the back, indicating the following: Artist (Name, Address, and Contact Numbers) Title of the work, Medium, Size, Year and Price.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

All participants must be responsible for their entries. The GSIS shall not undertake any pick-up or transportation of any artwork to or from any point of origin. **WET PAINTINGS AND SCULPTURES WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.**

Entries must be submitted at the GSIS Museum located at the GSIS Main Office, Financial Center, Reclamation Area, Pasay City (CCP Complex – Diosdado Macapagal Ave) on APRIL 17, 2010 (SATURDAY) FROM 8:00 AM UNTIL 4:00 PM only.

Entries submitted before or after the stated date and time shall not be accepted. Mail forwarders coming from the provinces should be advised by the participants themselves that the entry will only be accepted on the said submission date. Participants from the provinces are also encouraged to group together so that bringing or shipping their entries to Pasay City will be cheaper.

During the submission, the entry must have the following:

A ☐ Completely filled-up and signed official entry form with one (1) 1 x 1 ID colored picture.

B ☐ Photocopy of ONE valid ID (for age verification). The only acceptable IDs include: Current School ID, PRC License, Driver's License, Official Company ID, copy of Passport, Postal ID, SSS ID, GSIS-E-card, Senior Citizen's ID, Voter's ID, NBI/Police Clearance, AAP Membership ID.

C ☐ 5" x 7" colored photo of the work with the following information written at the back: Artist (Name, Address, and Contact Numbers) Title of the work, Medium, Size, Year and Price.

D ☐ Notarized affidavit of the ENTRY FORM certifying originality of entry and subscription to the rules and regulations of the competition.

Note: Application and entries will not be accepted without the above-mentioned requirements.

JUDGING, PRIZES AND AWARDING DATE

13. Announcement and awarding of winners will be held at the GSIS Theater. The date for the awarding of winners will be announced later.

14. Cash Awards for the winners in each of the three (3) categories:

1st Prize	-	**P 300,000.00**
2nd Prize	-	**200,000.00**
3rd Prize	-	**100,000.00**

ALL PRIZES ARE SUBJECT TO 20% TAX PER GOVERNMENT RULING

15. All prize-winning entries will automatically become properties of the GSIS and will be included in the GSIS Art Collection.

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22. Officers of AAP and other individual artists tapped to assist the GSIS are not allowed to participate in the said competition.

For inquiries, please call the following numbers GSIS Museum of Art – 479-3588, 09291714091 and look for Leslie or Mayette or email us at museum@gsis.gov.ph

GSIS

"SUHAYAN"
Painting by Vicente Manansala
GSIS Museum Collection

DIPLOMATIC STEP UP Businessman George T. Yang (left) was recently promoted from honorary consul of the Bank of Brunei to honorary consul general. The announcement was made by Brunei Ambassador to the Philippines Tengku Feduzian Tengku Ibrahim (right) during a courtesy call on Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo (center).

City hit for naming street after cigarette

A NONGOVERNMental health group has taken the Tuguegarao City government to task for naming one of its streets after the American cigarette brand Philip Morris, which it described as a "product that has consistently contributed to 10 Filipinos dying today."

Quezon City-based Framework Convention on Tobacco Control Alliance Philippines (FCAP) Coordinator Ma. Socorro Echavez said in an open letter to Tuguegarao Mayor Jesus Tejada Lapuz and members of the Sangguniang Bayan for giving the street that name.

The Tuguegarao City council recently passed a resolution renaming a road-way in Tuguegarao Poblacion Barangay Philip Morris Street in appreciation of the tobacco company's "support for the arts."

The city hosts Philip Morris International's only factory in the country.

In a statement yesterday, FCAP executive director Mariner Llorque said "putting up a street sign bearing the name of a cigarette brand was not only a violation of an existing law, but was utterly irresponsible and insensitive to the health of Tuguegarao folk."

To do so "would be a blatant violation of Republic Act No. 9211, the Tobacco Regulation Act of 2003, and a betrayal of the trust reposed on you by your constituents," Lawyer Carmen Heras, Philip Morris' public affairs officer, yesterday told the Inquirer, "naming the street after the tobacco brand was an initiative of Tuguegarao Bonny Baba."

"I think it is a recognition of the company's contribution to that community," she said. Jerry E. Esplanada

DOH to ban mercury

GENEVA, Switzerland—The Department of Health said it would call for a ban in the importation of health products containing the highly toxic substance.

Health Secretary Esperanza Cabral issued the directive after meeting with the nongovernmental environmental health group, Health Care Without Harm-South-east Asia.

Cabral said measures would include the non-issuance of DOH permits to importers of medical devices like mercury thermometers and sphygmomanometers.

In early September 2009, the DOH ordered the gradual phase-out of medical devices containing mercury to all health care facilities nationwide. Jerry E. Esplanada

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Cabinet men told to quit now or face legal woes

From page A1

days as required by law, maintaining that it was not yet final and executory.

GMA to fill posts

Malacañang yesterday said that with or without Arroyo resigning, President Macapagal-Arroyo was preparing to fill the expected vacancies in her Cabinet.

Press Secretary Cerqueña-Ochoa Jr. said that "Transportation and Communications Secretary Leandro Mendoza had been mentioned as a possible replacement for Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, who is running for representative in Batangas.

"She has people in mind," Ochoa said, "but nobody knows," she said he added that Arroyo alone, at least for merely laughed. "I think whether or not there is a Supreme Court decision ... she is prepared to name people."

Asked whether there will be new faces in her Cabinet, Ochoa said Ms Arroyo had yet spoken to him about this.

Other Cabinet members affected by the ruling include chief Presidential Legal Counsel Raul Gonzalez, Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap, Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya, Justice Secretary Agnes De-vanadera and Presidential Management Staff Director General Hermogenes Esperon.

Except for Gonzalez, who is running for a seat in the Senate, all these Cabinet members are seeking seats in Congress.

Don't wait longer

"President Arroyo should not wait a minute longer in signing the release papers of the members of her Cabinet who are running for elective posts. The high court has already spoken," said Manuel Villar said in a statement.

The Nacionalista Party standard-bearer said while campaigning in Leyte that any decision seeking reconsideration of the decision would only "lead to objectionable results."

Villar said those Cabinet officials might be accused of using their office to gain advantage over their political opponents. He also feared that the quality of service could suffer.

Sen. Loren Legarda, Villar's running mate, said she did not expect any disruption in the delivery of services in the departments concerned, pointing out undersecretaries were in place to keep operations functioning.

Credibility regained

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. and Senators Francis Escudero and Juan Ponce Enrile all agreed on the high court's decision.

"It's a step of the high court to regain its credibility," Pimentel said.

"People in Cabinet positions have funds allocated for them to dispose of and there is the temptation to use not only the funds for the election but also the use of the power of their offices," Pimentel said in a phone interview.

Escudero said it was not enough that he agreed with the court ruling. "It only is level the playing field and avoid the abuse of public funds for personal political gains."

Pangilinan said that Malacañang should "learn when to stop and accept the reality that it cannot win all the time."

House Speaker Prospero Nograles advised his party-mates in the Cabinet to heed the court.

In a text message, Nograles said: "The Supreme Court has spoken and all lawyers of the land must abide when the decision becomes final after the motion for reconsideration is acted upon."

'Dedicated'

In a statement, Bayan Muna party-list Rep. Neri Colmenares said the appointed officials could be disqualified from the elections if they defied the court decision.

Liberal Party broker, former Senator president and Liberal Party senatorial candidate, said all Cabinet members seeking elective post should resign immediately out of "dedication." NHK reports from Bacolod City, Bikel Atienza in Davao and Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

DON'T ROCK THE BOAT President Macapagal-Arroyo visits the Puerto Princesa Subterranean River National Park in Sabang, Palawan, on Tuesday. The underground river is the Philippine entry to the global search for the seven new wonders of nature now being voted on online. On the boat with her is Puerto Princesa City Mayor Edward Hagedorn. EPI MANUEL

Up to 8-hour outages hit Mindanao provinces; Luzon grid stable

From page A1

terms, according to NGCP.

Data from NGCP showed that the available capacity on the island yesterday was only 841 MW compared with the peak demand of 1,260 MW.

The power crisis has raised fears that it would imperil the conduct of automated elections on the island on May 10.

In a presentation at a seminar here, Norman Vincent Montero, senior technical specialist at the Department of Energy's power group, said Mindanao was expected to have a critical supply this year.

But as to how critical it would be will depend on the water levels in the Agus and Pulangi hydropower complexes.

Mindanao has been suffering from a power supply shortfall as the 52 Nino weather phenomenon takes its toll on the hydropower facilities, which provide half of its electricity.

The total available hydropower capability in Mindanao as of Feb. 23 was 441 MW or just 45 percent of its total rated capacity of 982 MW.

Because of the low water levels at reservoirs, as a result of the dry spell, most hydropower units are running units very limited generating capacity.

Agus 1 was generating on 23 MW; Agus 2, 60 MW; Agus 4, 71 MW; Agus 5, 50 MW; Agus 6, 165 MW; Agus 7, 25 MW; and Pulangi, 126 MW.

"The government will implement contingency measures ordered needed to meet the electricity demand of the grid," Montero said.

Generation and selling power

Energy Secretary Angelo T. Reyes last week said that the government would be able to address "more expeditiously" the power supply shortage in Mindanao if it allowed electricity through state-run National Power Corp.

This means invoking Sec. 71 of the Electric Power Industry Reform Act, which would allow National Power Corp. (Napocor) to engage in the power generation and selling business following the declaration of an "imminent power shortage" and the granting of emergency powers, according to Reyes.

"The power shortage in Mindanao is not only imminent, it's already there," he said.

Invoking Sec. 71 would allow Napocor to buy or lease generation sets that can augment the power supply in Mindanao.

Very expensive

These gensets, which can be made available in one month, are, however, "very expensive sources of power," Reyes said.

He said the government had begun implementing a number of measures to ensure that Mindanao would have adequate power reserves in time for the election in May.

These include the supply augmentation program in which big industrial firms or enterprises that generate their own electricity are tapped to sell their excess capacity to those who need it.

Gap in Visayas plugged

In Puerto Princesa, President Macapagal-Arroyo said the "energy gap" in the Visayas was being "plugged" by several power plants.

In a speech before the start of the Cabinet meeting, Ms Arroyo said the power plants supplying the country's gap in the Visayas included the 260-MW plant in Naga, Cebu and a Duqol 1x-ensuress by Mirodaudi, and its partners for more than 600 MW in Cebu and Iloilo."

"In fact their new 246-mw plants in Toledo Cebu, and opened last Sunday and will be inaugurated on March 1 with myself as guest of honor," she said.

The roaring brownouts have begun to ease in the Visayas over the past two weeks, according to NGCP.

It is expected to experience a more stable supply of electricity this year, as power plants are scheduled to begin their operations soon.

In the meantime, Raul Galano, NGCP head of systems operations in the Visayas, said three power facilities were expected to generate another 115 MW, providing the much-needed power for the main grid.

Metrobank Group

Galano identified these as the 246 MW coal-fired power plant of Cebu Energy Development Corp. (CEDC), owned by the Metrobank Group; 130-MW coal-fired plant of Kepco SPC Power Corp., and 164 MW unit of Panay Energy Development Corp.

He also said the government had undertaken a number of short-term measures to ensure stable power supply in the Visayas.

These included the acceleration of the preventive maintenance in the 50-MW Cebu Thermal 1 and the testing of CEDC's 246-MW power plant, which has an 82-MW capacity.

On Feb. 22, the Visayas grid had a 5-MW grant power reserve. As of yesterday however, it rewarded at 29 MW dollars.

Other short-term measures included the energizing [illegible] of embedded generators (privately owned units) to take part in the Voluntary Load Curtailment (VLC) and maximizing the Leyte-Cebu submarine cable loading up to 600 MW, according to Galano.

Sufficient Luzon supply

In the Luzon grid, the power supply remained sufficient to meet demand. Cayas power reserves stood at 662 MW, according to the NGCP.

As the seminar

Drought won't affect pot crop–PDEA

FORT DELPILAR, BAGUIO CITY—WILL THE long dry spell end marijuana cultivation?

Apparently not, said Dionisio Santiago, director general of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA).

Although marijuana plantations require abundant water, the temperature is still cool in the Cordillera hinterlands where farms are located, Santiago told reporters during the Philippine Military Academy alumni homecomings here on Saturday.

He said the illegal drug trade had shifted from marijuana production to the export of the weed. Growers and financiers had been investing in technology and high-quality seeds to keep the supply flowing to the market.

"It's too cool here in Baguio. Marijuana thrives in cool climate," Santiago said.

Each marijuana plant requires about a gallon of water daily in farmers had been nurturing their plantations under the cover of tall trees, he said, to hide the plants and to keep the stalks from drying up.

The marijuana is harvested between November and March—the period when PDEA undertakes its routine operations in the Cordillera.

In November last year, PDEA eradicated 1.2 million marijuana seedlings and 300,000 plants in a raid in Bakun, Benguet. The plants, valued at P112 million, were destroyed.

Meanwhile, on Sen. Vicente Sotto III, former chair of the Dangerous Drugs Board, said the problem of corruption, where police-crats engage in the illegal drug trade, has not reached alarming levels in the country.

"It's not as alarming as in other countries," said Sotto, who was at the Subic Bay Freeport. — Nimrod Cabreros, Inquirer Northern Luzon and Robert Gonzaga, Inquirer Central Luzon

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SHARP

PRAYERS STOP 'SAME' Two years prior the country as thousands of civilians block the path of Marcos and their tanks on Edsa in this 1986 file photo.

FLOWER POWER A girl carrying a basket of flowers lends out peace offerings to soldiers who have been ordered by the dictator Marcos to Malacañang to attack rebel soldiers hiding out in Camp Crame led by then Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile and then Lt. Gen. Fidel V. Ramos in this 1986 file photo.

'The Filipino is worth crying for'

From page A1

ent was gone, Cory Aquino was the only elected President. Key Marcos officials—Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile and armed Forces Deputy Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Fidel Ramos—had defected and drawn the military to Aquino's side.

It But here, thirteen was some where over the Pacific headed for exile in Hawaii. The supposedly heroic Filipino who had at impassioned no-show I had heard him for on the addressing the US Congress on my very first night in the Philippines in 1986, had finally departed for good.

It for surpassed by the end of the Bush II era in America for its emotional impact, and drew as much global attention.

Pepa is crying

I took into a chair, my wife and children around me, the smell of worms still seeding emotional my head.

"Papa, why are you crying?" one of my children asked.

My wife now tells me that I said: "Because I am so happy."

I might also have said, "Because I think the Filipino is worth crying for," and they would have understood fully.

Foreign and Filipino journalists faced a special challenge to remain free of emotion in covering the dramatic events in 1986 that ended two decades of Ferdinand Marcos' rule in the Philippines.

Journalists pride themselves on their objectivity. But even the grimiest hearts can crack.

When the late detachment television anchor Robert Cronkite reported the assassination of John F. Kennedy, he wept before the world.

When the tall Obama became the first black president of the United States, many reporters couldn't help but share the emotional release of a nation that had waited so long for Martin Luther King's dream of harmony between black and white to come true.

The end to the widely acknowledged national disaster that was the Ferdinand Marcos presidency was enough to bring tears of joy across the political spectrum and to the eyes of some of the most objective journalists.

Even more recently, reporters and photographers who flocked to Haiti to witness the aftermath of an earthquake that killed more than 100,000 people came away weeping, shaken by the human suffering they couldn't help but share.

A night that overwhelms

As a journalist, who was first hired by the AP in the Philippines more than 40 years ago and then returned again for six years in the 1980s, I have always tried to remain objective and keep myself out of the stories I covered.

I tried not to weep openly at the several moments referred to in this series I adopted as a Peace Corps volunteer in 1966, as a local-hire AP reporter in 1970 and again as AP Manila bureau chief at the end of the Marcos era.

But one night and morning in my history with the Philippines was so completely overwhelming that I could not help but share the tears of a battered nation after Marcos flew out of the Palace.

Who knows? Do we ever really know why we ignore men and women sometimes find ourselves reduced to tears in moments of?

There were so many things worth crying for...for the challenges facing the new President, for the people who finally showed the courage to rise up, even for the Marcoses, with whom I had shared those early days of such great promise.

At peace, finally

The next morning, walking through the unwanted, open house of Malacañang, which had become so symbolic of the Marcoses' governing isolation, we find clusters of ordinary Filipinos cleaning with former Marcos soldiers and marshaling about the Palace compound where President Cory Aquino would later reduce to live. brought another feeling of awe, of healing relief.

The Palace was not reduced to ashes, as it might have been in a more violent revolution. The people were no longer moving fast and shouting angry slogans as many had in recent months.

Manila was not to chaos as it might have been. The country was, amazingly, at peace. And so was I.

A story worth telling

Now, some 23 years later, Looser and I have returned on what just happened to be the day of the official start of another presidential campaign.

No matter what the outcome, it clearly will not have the same transitional impact as the first Edsa uprising—even though the names of Aquino, Marcos, Enrile and many others familiar across the decades are still part of this election.

But there is a certain irony to the fact that nearly a quarter century after the Marcoses' 20-year rule ended, it is this Aquino legacy that is most apparent.

Images of Cory and Noynoy flap in the wind on yellow flags donned on the streets of Pampanga. Everywhere are signs announcing the celebration of the Edsa anniversary. And yes Noynoy Aquino is candidate.

The half-dozen coup attempts against Aquino—and all the Ruby Mistress she survived from her enemies—were not successful, while the Marcos overthrow remains a turning point in Philippine history.

Whether the journalist's tears were from simple exhaustion, tears of joy (over) for the end of a nightmare or tears of relief that for a nation sure to find an end to suffering, what was true at least is that the story was told and the most fragile began.

Journalists, for all their attempts at objectivity thoroughness and ultimate finish are still just story-tellers. And the Philippine story is still worth telling...with or without tears.

BACK TO THE FUTURE The former publisher of the Philippine Daily Inquirer, Eugenio Duran Aganzol (center), with David Brinson (left) and wife Leonor Tarazo four years after Edsa I, the Aganzos have returned to Manila on the official start of another presidential campaign. And yes, an Aquino is running.

JC virtually 'concedes' presidency to Noy, but won't give up race

From page A1

of Ang Kapatiran party later described his remark as just a bit of sarcasm.

Asked if he was serious about something to Aquino, he told reporters: "No, I said it with a smile.

"You have to win. Let's face it, [Aquino] has a big chance. But we have 99 plus days [before the elections], and I'm here to give it my all."

De los Reyes went on to take a dig at the LP saying it was not enough for a presidential candidate to continue the Arroyo administration and accountable government, and that his political party must do the same.

'Please'

In a subsequent interview with the Inquirer, De los Reyes said he would never give up on the presidential race.

He said that with his remark, "I meant to impress upon the senator the need for a responsible and accountable political party that promotes good governance, especially for an individual who would pursue a 'personal audit' to catch a smuggler or a corrupt official responsible for substandard infrastructure within the first nine weeks of his presidency, or who would chase the grab himself with himself and his cable."

He was quoting Aquino in an Inquirer report on Feb. 20 on what Malacañang would be if the senator wins the presidency.

"In behalf of Ang Kapatiran party, I will never concede it for or any of the [other] presidential candidates," De los Reyes said.

"The only thing I will concede is that the major political parties have failed this nation, particularly in passing key legislation in parliament for our Constitution that would have liberated our nation from the dynasts, oligarchs and the elite."

De los Reyes also said simplifying the complex by getting down to some policy issues affecting human rights would provide clarity to the electorate's basis for choosing who should be the next president.

He said this would prevent the risk of voters getting "confused and confounded" by the range of issues, including "peripheral issues," being raised both in the media and in various forums.

"Otherwise, these can already be addressed by the candidates' stand on matters of governance concerns," he said.

Questioning politics

Earlier in the forum, there were slightly tense moments when De los Reyes urged Aquino to push the LP to become accountable and transparent.

"If I'm saying is we really need a responsible and accountable political party. The political parties of before, even those in the distant Pro[illegible] until Marcos' time, did not seek to uphold the Constitution, like the previous egoistic political dynasties or the full disclosure of government transactions," he said.

De los Reyes said he was not questioning the LP's moral authority.

"But I'm questioning the propriety of the kind of politics they're conducting," he said, adding:

"Our person believes this, but it is not adhered [to] by the membership. There are no clear and specific supporters.

"What is the stand of the LP and Nacionalista Party on [political dynasties]? What is their stand on the pork barrel? These are obstacles to the progress of the people.

"What is their stand on a party list as a presidential candidate? That's what we should ask. Whatever they say will be useless if they don't take a party stand."

HELLO THERE Presidential candidate Mar-roy Aquino (right) shakes the hand of Human Rights Commissioner Leila de Lima (left) during the Second Integrity and Human Rights Conference in Makati City. Behind are presidential contenders Jamby Madrigal and JC de los Reyes.

De los Reyes also said he was not attacking the LP standard-bearer.

"It's not him I'm hitting. It's everybody who supports the kind of politics that breeds irresponsible and corrupt political parties," he said.

Neither Aquino nor Villar

Asked whom he would support if it became a two-man race between Aquino and Sen. Manuel Villar, another survey front-runner who was a no-show at the forum, the Los Reyes said: "After ranking, tell me."

He said Aquino appeared "peeved" by his remarks.

But the senator responded with a joke. "He [senator] may be coming to town [That's the president] with me [them] here's..."

He proceeded to point out that he and the LP were with De Los Reyes' party in fighting the scrapped National Broadband Network deal with China's ZTE Corp., among other irregular government deals.

But then, Aquino said, drawing laughter from the audience, "the media would now say we're calling Kapatiran's bluff. [candidate name] or media, propaganda [name ang Kapatiran]."

He added that the people, especially the poor, were more concerned with basic matters, like putting food on the table. With a report from Jovic Yee and Ding

DOH chief snubs Church on condoms issue

By Jerry E. Esplanada

WHO'S AFRAID OF THE Catholic Church?

Not the Department of Health (DOH) which, despite strong opposition from the Church, has declared that it would continue giving away condoms to "people who need them."

The condom distribution program is one of the "very many things that, if we actually do them, is going to really diminish the spread of HIV-AIDS in the Philippines," Health Secretary Esperanza Cabral told the business.

Cabral said the incidence of HIV-AIDS (human immunodeficiency virus-acquired immunodeficiency syndrome) in the country had acquired the proportions of "an epidemic, not just a scare."

She said the health department's other preventions campaign was "the education of young people, children in school, those in the workplaces and Filipinos who go overseas, as well as tourists and transients."

The DOH handed out free condoms on Valentine's Day as part of its campaign to stem the spread of HIV, which causes AIDS. The move angered the Catholic Church, which forbids artificial birth control, including the use of condoms.

The bishops claimed that the way to stop the spread of HIV-AIDS was to follow the teachings of the Church and to respect the sanctity of the human body.

Resignation sought

In statements posted yesterday on the website of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, Lipa Bishop Ramon Arguelles called for Cabral's resignation.

"It is no business of her customer to the government to be pushing the use of condoms, which we all know is not a deterrent to AIDS," Arguelles said.

The statement was signed by nine other bishops—Archbishop Antonio Ledesma of Jaro, Archbishop Ramon Arguelles of Lipa, Bishop Ramon Argü

Loren denies backing Jocjoc; Bolante men mum

SEN. LOREN LEGARDA HAS DENIED declaring support for a party founded by controversial former agriculture undersecretary Jocelyn "Jocjoc" Bolante in Capiz, which Legarda recently visited in her vice presidential campaign.

"I have publicly announced my support for the candidacy of some mayors running for reelection in the province of Capiz, including that of Roxas City Mayor Vicente Bermejo," Legarda said in a press statement.

"I have not endorsed the candidacy of Bolante," the statement quoted her as saying.

Bolante was accused of masterminding a scam to use P728 million of agriculture funds for fertilizer to buy support for President Macapagal-Arroyo's bid for a regular term in 2004.

The statement also quoted Legarda as saying she was grateful for the warm reception she got in Capiz, half of her rival in the vice presidential race, Sen. Manuel Antonio Roxas II.

Members of Bolante's party, Ugnayan Ilda Capiz (UIC), kept mum on Legarda's denial of her support for the party's candidates.

Ann Ibarda, UIC spokesperson, said party officials have yet to meet to discuss Legarda's statements denying that the Nacionalista Party, the party of Sen. Manuel Villar, has allied itself with UIC.

"We would like to be first informed of the statements made by Loren before we release our official statement," Ibarda, former Capiz governor, said on Sunday.

Legarda declared support for UIC candidates during her visit to Capiz. She said she will support the UIC's 12 reelectionist mayors and Roxas City Mayor Vicente Bermejo.

Elmer Amarraga, NP provincial chair in Capiz, confirmed on Sunday the statement of support that Legarda made to UIC.

But he said Bolante was not yet on the list of UIC candidates that will be supported by NP, Amarraga said.

Amarraga did not say why Bolante, who founded UIC in be his vehicle for a gubernatorial campaign, was not on the NP list. Bolante refused to take calls from reporters.

He earlier, however, said he also is still deciding who to support among the governorial candidates. A partner of Bolante and Villar in one Capiz town, however, was taken by Bolante opponents in the province as a sign of the alliance between the two.

Felipe U. Celino, Inquirer Visayas

VICE PRESIDENTIAL aspirant Loren Legarda checks out vegetables and other goods during her trip to the Carbon public market in Cebu City at one of her presidential sorties. JOY CABAL

Negros town execs eye state of calamity

'There has been no rain in Murcia for a long time and our crops have been badly affected...'

By Carla P. Gomez
Inquirer Visayas

BACOLOD CITY—WITH 200,000AT RISK, straying over 19 million sacks of rice and corn in Murcia, Mayor Esteban Concillado on Monday said he has asked the town's Sangguniang Bayan to declare a state of calamity in the town.

"There has been no rain in Murcia for a long time and our crops have been badly affected," Concillado said.

The reports of the Negros Occidental Office of the Provincial Agriculturist said Murcia's rice and corn crop losses have reached P1.4 million, the second highest in the province.

Concillado said that by declaring a state of calamity, Murcia could allocate funds to be used in helping farmers in the town.

He added that the Murcia Sangguniang Bayan would hold a special session to act on his request to declare the town in a state of calamity.

Hinigaran Mayor Hermilo Aguilar said they have yet to determine if there would be a need for a declaration of a state of calamity in his town. Hinigaran is also suffering from the effects of the drought.

Aguilar said agriculture department personnel were assessing the situation in his town.

Based on the report of provincial workers, Hinigaran was the worst hit by the drought, which had destroyed 115.28 hectares of rainfed rice farms worth at least P2.16 million.

The provincial government also placed the drought damage in seven towns and two cities in Negros Occidental, including Hinigaran and Murcia, at P7.6 million as of Monday.

Negros Occidental Gov. Isidro Zayco said the declaration of a state of calamity due to the drought by towns and cities in Negros Occidental could be done if necessary.

However, Zayco said it was not necessary to declare a state of calamity in the entire province because because not all areas have been hurt by the drought.

"We need to validate the extent of the drought damage in the towns and cities to include them in our requests for assistance from the Department of Agriculture," Zayco said.

The provincial agriculturist's office reported on Monday that the damages included those in rain-fed rice farms in Himamaylan City (P648,475), rain-fed rice and corn farms in Cauayan (P830,500) and corn farms in La Castellana (P340,000), Ilog (P30,000), Hinoba-an (P913,500), Kabankalan City (P162,000) and Cuinonza (P270,000).

The provincial government has conducted 55 cloud seeding ops since Feb. 1 to induce rain to fight the effects of the drought. The provincial agriculturist said.

CLEAN water is a scarce commodity in many places, but with the ongoing dry spell, water, whether clean or not, has become scarce in many places. CHERRY LYN CHUA AND JOY CABAL

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OPINION

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'Partisan potential'

LIKE MANY, WE WELCOME THE SUPREME Court's reconsideration of the matter of appointed officials running for elective office. These officials really ought to be deemed resigned the moment they file their certificates of candidacy. The Court's reversal of its Dec. 1, 2009 decision in the Quinto and Tolentino v. Comelec case turns this "ought" into reality.

The new ruling, written by Chief Justice Reynato Puno, describes the effect of the first decision with precision: it "paved the way for public appointive officials to continue discharging the powers, prerogatives and functions of their office notwithstanding their entry into the political arena." The original decision, written by Associate Justice Eduardo Nachura, essentially argued that forcing appointive officials who had already entered the political arena to resign their posts, while allowing elected officials to stay in theirs, violated the equal protection clause of the Constitution.

EDITORIALS

The Puno decision meets this argument with many counter-arguments, plus the corrective of reality: In truth, leaving appointive officials in place gives them an unfair advantage over their election rivals. Nachura's perspective "obviously fails to consider a different, yet equally plausible, threat to the government posed by the partisan potential of a large and growing bureaucracy: the danger of systematic abuse perpetrated by a 'powerful political machine' that has attained 'the scattered powers of government workers' so as to give itself avail its incumbent workers an 'unbeatable grasp on the reins of power.'"

As the track record of the Arroyo administration proves, and as Malacañang's belligerent attitude to the new ruling demonstrates, officials of the Executive are not shy about using the "partisan potential" of the administration's political machine. For this reason alone, many Filipinos welcome the reversal: the playing field that Justice Nachura sought to level in the abstract has been made so by the new ruling, in the concrete.

Self-inflicted wound

WE MUST NOTE, THOUGH, THAT THE COURT did itself great harm with its first ruling on the controversial election case. Voting by a slim 8-6 majority, the Court last December effectively decided to throw out long-established jurisprudence on the matter of resign-to-run provisions in election law. The equal protection argument the eight-person majority offered was less than compelling (in part because it had already been answered in previous cases); the right vote all but guaranteed another round of deliberations. Nothing wrong with any of these, per se. But considering that the established jurisprudence, highlighted by the ruling in Farinas v. Executive Secretary, was unambiguous, and considering further that the real beneficiary of the first ruling was the Arroyo administration and its many officials running in the May 10 polls, enough justices should have pointed out the danger a slim and eminently reversible majority in a controversial case posed to the Supreme Court itself.

Thus, we have the unsightly spectacle of a new, bigger majority admonishing the pioneers of the first decision (and the author of a dissent in the second decision) for spurning the wisdom of Court's past.

"The case at bar is a crass attempt to resurrect a dead issue. The rationale is that our assailed Decision [that is, the ruling of Dec. 1] gave it new life. We ought to be guided by the doctrine of stare decisis et non quieta movere. This doctrine, which is really 'adherence to precedents,' mandates that once a case has been decided one way, then another case involving exactly the same point at issue should be decided in the same manner. This doctrine is one of policy grounded on the necessity for securing certainty and stability of judicial decisions."

In other words, the short-fuse that the first decision attempted, in a match that goes back a hundred years, was out of line, in more ways than one.

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A puzzling Supreme Court decision

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

BECAUSE OF DEFENDING JUDGES AND JUSTices because they will soon be out of jobs, they may be providing for their future by citing the leaders of justice in favor of one of the litigants, despite the fact that they will be hired, naively rewarded for the rest of their lives by their "benefactors."

A decision by the Supreme Court on a corporate quarrel spotlighted this blight in our judicial system. Filipino investors in the Philippine Racing Club (PRC) had sued the majority group of Chinese-Filipino businessmen led by Lucio Co (a.k.a. Albert Co Sing Huan), another leading Malaysian gaming firm, for managing ownership of the P12-billion peso racetrack in Santa Ana, a prime real estate property with shrine of work in a corporate shell company with hardly any assets called PRI Davies. What's more, the Filipino investors had not participated in the move to the new corporation. What happened to their investments? They were transferred to a shell company to which they have no say.

The Filipino shareholders asked for copies of documents, agreements, and financial statements to see the treasure of management. The majority group refused to show their worthy.

The Filipinos went to court to stop the consummation of the swap deal that they described as "lopsided," the Makati Regional Trial Court and the Court of Appeals decided in favor of the Filipino shareholders. The Filipino-Chinese-Malaysian group went to the Supreme Court.

Most observers expected the high tribunal to agree with the decisions of the lower courts. But surprise, surprise, the high court decision, penned by a retiring justice, reversed the decisions.

The complaint of the Filipino shareholders regarding the lack of transparency in the deal got no sympathy from the high court. The Filipinos had complained that their right to information regarding the corporate resolutions to consummate with the swap deal was violated. In other words, the money of the Filipinos was invested, without their knowledge and permission. In a shell company they know nothing about. Moreover, the majority partners refused to show these pertinent documents or to tell them more about the deal or what happened to their money. The Filipinos were trying to protect their investments.

But the high court opted to dismiss the complaint. Only one Filipino shareholder had made an express demand for copies of documents related to the PRI Davies acquisition, the Court said. Other Filipino shareholders had not made any similar demand, it said. For being a lone voice, the Filipino shareholder got no sympathy. Never mind if the complaint was meritorious and that the majority shareholders should have been transparent and truthful to their minority partner, the fact that the Filipino was a lone voice was enough reason to throw the case out.

The resolution also found reason to exonerate the Malaysian-backed group. According to the Court, it was not Co and company who refused to allow the examination of documents by the Filipino shareholders; it was the corporate secretary, Justito Manalo, who denied the demands for copies of pertinent documents. "It is Corporate Secretary Manalo who should be liable," the Court said in absolving the Co group.

But since Manalo was not the subject of the Filipino investor's complaint, he is not likely to face sanctions. At least the Court pinpointed the responsible party who denied the Filipino shareholders access to the pertinent documents. And by pinpointing Manalo, it subtly agreed that there was a need to deny access to the pertinent documents in the PRI Davies transaction.

But what is really puzzling is why the same Court dismissed another complaint against the Malaysian-backed Co group by the suspended Pryce that even if the latter was not a party to the case being resolved. Lawyers of the Pryce group were left scratching their heads.

Some people say that is what is called a "package deal." The Court said it was "forum shopping." But legal experts say the Pryce group may have been denied their day in court with the granting of a suit to which they are not even a party.

* * *

Here is another corporate war that you will hear and read about for months (and maybe years) to come. Sports enthusiasts know already of the currently dormant Philippine Basketball League, the excellent basketball team of Red Bull, the energy drink. Red Bull has just changed distributors.

Red Bull is owned and manufactured by T.C. Pharmaceutical Industries Co., Ltd., a Thailand-based company. The Philippine distributor used to be Synergy Food and Drinks Inc. (SFDI), Ltd. October, T.C. Pharmaceutical terminated the distribution agreement with SFDI, allegedly because the latter was unable to pay its debts and loans.

The new exclusive distributor of Red Bull is Maryland Distributors, Inc. The bucket-ball team will be revived, according to reports.

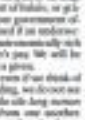
Red Bull is reportedly the No. 1-selling energy drink in the world. It remains the leading energy drink worldwide because "of its unique combination of quality and high standard," according to press releases.

* * *

I made a mistake in an item in the column of Feb. 16 in El Niño and the lack of water. I identified the previous chief of the National Water Resources Board as Rogelio Singson. Professor Alejandro, I was wrong. The correct first name is Ernesto. Defensor is his father. My apologies.

The people and their power

There's the Rub



Conrado de Quiros

SOMEONE ASKED ME AN INTERESTING question recently. Edsa, she said, did not exist. It stop corruption. It was rife under Cory too with the Ramagundas list. So what makes you think it can be done by a new president?

My answer to that is a little economic and has to do with the way we look at corruption.

I myself have always thought corruption is something the public can't fully wrap its mind around on. I say this despite the surveys that rate corruption as big concern of Filipinos, rich and poor alike. Depends on what you mean by corruption. Or depends on how the public sees, or interprets, corruption.

We do have a concept of stealing or stolen. The Filipino word for thief in particular, "kawatan," is even more loaded. And we are shocked to turn to the spectacle of theft or the presence of the magnanimous in our midst. As I keep saying, when we corner a pickpocket or snatcher in a sidewalk, we beat him up to an inch of his life. Clearly, we do not like people who lift wallets or grab old (or pretty) ladies' handbags.

That is not the way we regard public officials whom we know or believe, to be corrupt. We do not beat them to within an inch of their lives, we beg them for their life to become the missing or missing of the wedding of our son or daughter. Why the discrepancy in our moral temper? Is it merely the prospect of personally benefiting from the corruption?

Possibly. Self-interest is the best inducer of blindness. But I have another explanation for it.

It is that we see nothing, or little that is wrong with "corruption." I put "corruption" in quotation marks to suggest that other lack of strong negative reaction to it. That is really borne out by the fact that the people we have been calling "corrupt" for a long long time have had long and thriving political careers, some of them spanning half a century. That a person can be well liked, even admired, by the people who are supposed to be victimized by his or her corruption, an assertion that suggests either universal disregard or universal toleration. The latter in particular suggests that corruption is so widespread, so common, so respectable it has become a given.

We do not really have a concept of 'unjust' money, as I keep saying me. Nobody really seriously expects his turista to come back in the form of roads or bridges, security and services. If they do, well and good; if not, never to long. We think of taxes as some sort of rebate, or gift, money, or windfall, we give to our government officials. We will not be surprised if an undersecretary or general gets to be astronomically rich while on a clerk's or soldier's pay. We will be surprised if he does not. It is a given.

It continues: all this is true even if we think of corruption as not without cooking, we devote ourselves as the victims. "Eh nde lang naman yan," they're just stealing from one another. That it is for the poor especially who figure they don't pay taxes anyway. Surprising that such time they buy something, they do, with VAT. That we are in fact complicit in enabling them you personally or you can't see that it is the same thing as a pickpocket lifting your wallet or a snatcher snatching your cell phone, you cannot be angry at it.

What we do have is the concept of cupon. The notion, which dates back to Spanish times, is when the powerful general was audited by auditor before he ended his tenure, is that it's OK to plunder so long as you don't plunder too greatly. We do not greatly mind that the public official pockets some of the money, we mind that he pockets all of it. We do not greatly mind that the public official makes personal use of some of the granaries or trillions, we mind that he does not distribute the rest to us. We do not greatly mind that the candidate accomplices in, pensioners in pillage, we mind that he does so exceptionally greedily.

The phrase "konsa na, solve na" captures that too. We can bear oppression, we cannot bear too much oppression.

So how can corruption be stopped or curbed? Edsa, the people in force, first as president, however straight and upright, can do it by himself. The only way it can be done is for the people to be there.

The only way it can be stopped is for the new president to campaign, for more than he did to run-the-ordinance, to give the people an appreciation of taxpayers' money. Or since that is abstract too, to make people realize that the taxes they pay...and everyone pays it, whether he is salaried or not—is their money. When public officials take that money, they are not taking something you gave them freely to do with as they please, they are stealing something you held close. When public officials take that money, they are stealing from you. When public officials take that money, they are not taking something you gave them freely to do with as they please, they are stealing something you held close. When public officials take that money, they are stealing from you. It is nearly and exactly as a pickpocket or snatcher steals what little you have.

The only way it can be stopped is for the people themselves to rise spontaneously, as they've risen spontaneously to form night watches in their villages, to form civic organizations to protect the community from strongmen, to demand that their taxes, their money, what little they have—three years of saving the same thing—are used to build classrooms for their children and buy medicines for their sick. If corruption does not thrive in other countries like the United States, it is because there the cross-will not stand for it. It is because they are outraged by it and write to their congressmen or shout their cause in media and marches, making sure the thief, the crooked, the lawless, is exposed and removed from office. Whether he be millionaire or a member of Congress. You want to stop corruption, you need the people and their power.

It has stopped tyrannies, why can't it stop corruption?

No one owns Edsa 1

THE COMMEMORATION OF THE EDSA PEOPLE Power revolution this year has provided a contentious squabble among assorted social groups over the question of who owns Edsa 1.

Twenty-four years after Edsa 1, the soldiers, civil society groups, and even the Left, are at loggerheads in claiming a franchise of that historic moment that overthrew Edsa with a human flood of more than a million, never seen in any social science in the history of protests in this country.

While the uprising at Edsa galvanized normally antagonistic sectors—the formal political opposition, the Catholic Church, the unarmed civilians, Edsa Tanggol Nang Bayan, and the armed forces and the classic and unorganized free-floating, middle classes—into a massive protest movement to bring down a hated dictatorship of 14 years, only one element smelled there the indignation against the Marcos regime.

A quarter of century after that grand coalition, the country is hopelessly more fractured than in 1972, when Ferdinand Marcos declared martial law but dismantled the two party system democracy.

Nothing illustrates the disunion of the Edsa uprising more than the discordant forms and themes through which they now celebrate its commemoration. Even the definition of coup d'etat as a mechanism of political change has drastically changed. In the 1970s, coups were defined as a lightning science by rash but rebellious soldiers of strategic centers of state powers—the presidential palace, military headquarters, telecommunication stations (radio or TV), the legislature and the courts. The 1986 People Power changed all that science. The post Edsa coups were carried out with some semblance of negotiations among the coup conducting parties and fleshed with legitimate constitutional exercise in order to give legitimacy to the new gang of power grabbers (who were more acceptable and less intimidating to the divided public). It was in the aftermath of the overthrow of a discredited regime when the squabbles over power sharing and credits for the Edsa 1 or control of its direction—neither the soldiers, nor the political activists behind Cory, or the bishops and their legions of nuns and priests.

The soldiers would have loved to celebrate the Edsa 1 anniversary On Feb. 22, the day when Enrile, Ramos and the RAM coup planners declared their rebellion against Marcos in 1986, acceptance of this version of Edsa 1 would have meant recognition of their role and taking primary credit for starting the Edsa Revolution. This is a very recent view of Edsa 1—both diametrically (without) self-love, including the political opposition that ousted Estrada in 2001.

President Macapagal-Arroyo, a non-actor in Edsa, dodged being caught in this controversy by being absent at the official kick off last Monday of the official celebration of Edsa 1 at the Luneta (an eg mga tinyente, heneral, Defense Secretary Norberto Gonzalez stood in for her and read an innocuous speech defining People Power as "not partisan; is not about whose politics are supposed but the heroism of the many who held strongly to their faith in the Filipino"—a position that steered away from offending the military, the strongest pillar of her constituency.

The soldiers will have their anniversary celebration on Thursday, Feb. 25, to be carried by Liberal Party presidential candidate Sen. Benigno Aquino III whose group plans to celebrate the event on the date for similar, the heroism of the Edsa Revolution, was unsure in as president as President Corazon Aquino, the widow of Ninoy Aquino. Her party-list Edsa Tanggol Nang Bayan was prompted to rebuke Aquino that, "Edsa is not yours. Edsa is a specific event that was not invented or led by one particular person. So our loss a franchise on Edsa 1." Ocampo's rebuke was the worst of a beset to Edsa 1—that of the Left, who have vilified Edsa 1 because they see and it is a middle-class movement and not at all a revolution in the Marxist tradition. As a result they were bypassed by the current of history and marginalized in the post Edsa power arrangement.

ANALYSIS
Armando Doronila

What about GMA?

SHE MAY NOT BE CONFINED BY THE SUPREME Court ruling on appointed officials being deemed resigned since they file their candidacies, but President Macapagal-Arroyo faces an ethical and moral, if not legal, bind over her own candidacy for Congress.

Being an elected official, the President need not join her Cabinet officials and lower-ranking officials in having office, for a foreign two-question her own moral parameters, entering the party and privileges as well as the powers of the presidency while the fight an electoral battle for the right to represent the second district of Pampanga. The propriety, not to mention the legality and constitutionality of her running for Congress, was put to the test by the Supreme Court, but it says a lot about the President's sense of debasement (or lack of) that she chooses to put the country through the constitutional crisis rather than do the ethical and moral thing.

The President did not heed the wording of the Supreme Court decision, particularly the portion interpreting the previous controversial ruling "to do the policy of equal protection, it would have a disturbed if, while the wide net is cast and not exclusive, existing at the behest of both appointive and elective officials, were another in which a significant portion thereof is sustained. The disunity of that position is self-evident, to say the least."

The ruling underlines the dangerous nature of "the potential of a large and growing bureaucracy to the danger of systematic abuse perpetrated by a powerful political machine. . . so as to give it the need to accustom workers an unbreakable grasp on the reins of power."

If there is danger of "bureaucracy abuse" what more the danger posed by an abusive President?

* * *

THE ruling swayed of the justices in this decision could also give us hints into the motivations of the President, her spokespersons and champions in insisting on her just her right, but on the "urgency" to appoint the next Supreme Court justice.

Eight justices voted in the majority, led by Chief Justice Reynato Puno and joined in by Justices Antonio Carpio, Conchita Carpio Morales, Renato Corona, Adolfo Azcuna, Dante Tinga, Minita Chico-Nazario and Cancio Garcia, to declare the Court's most senior justice after Chief Justice Puno and widely touted as enjoying the President's favor and who has signified his willingness to be nominated to the post, Justice Antonio Carpio, as "senior justice" in the Court.

Justice Carpio, who has been a member of the Supreme Court since 1998, was appointed by President Arroyo in 2006. He was a member of the Cabinet of President Corazon Aquino, serving as defense secretary and undersecretary of justice

LETTERS

Airing debates on prime-time a corporate responsibility

FOR THE FIRST SEVERAL WEEKS, THERE had been a lot of presidential debates and forums. And I found it interesting and courageous that the local TV networks did not broadcast those debates on prime-time, when the most number of people are tuned in. What they did instead was air the debates late at night (past 10 p.m.), when those people had turned off their TV sets.

Instead of airing dreadful infomercials, entertainment "reality" shows and campaign ads about "budget of Meryll" and "Bayang Arimpad," why not broadcast the presidential debates on prime-time?

Why not educate the viewer-voters, especially the youth, about the issues our country is facing and ask where do these presidential candidates stand on these issues?

Why not engage the viewing public in intelligent discussion, instead of chattering out the same old boring jokes featuring the same "stars" leering at us?

Why not challenge the so-called stars to think and decide for themselves who they should vote for based on how these candidates propose to address the issue pressing issues facing our country, instead of showing campaign jingles from personalities, showbiz, fanfares and awards for people's intellectual capability?

I think not to broadcast the debates on prime time is highly irresponsible for the TV networks and is a great disservice to us, the viewing public. I mean, how many people have the time and money to go out of their way and attend the debates or watch them late at night? Most people have to rise early the next day for their daily servitude.

The power of prime-time TV should be used for the good of the people and not only for financial gain of the few. Will it hurt the bottom line of the TV houses if they allocate an hour or even for the presidential debates?

The TV networks should note: Sincerity, enlightenment and empower the viewer-voters.

—JESSICA REY CASTRO,
declanreycastro@yahoo.com.ph

Role of business leaders in elections

BEFORE HEAVY ELECTION, BUSINESS LEADers and influential families should choose a presidential candidate with a clear vision and a proven track record to catapult our country, economically, to even greater heights. As movers and shakers of our country, they should set aside the practice of asking favors (e.g., government contracts) from the election winner whose candidacy they have supported.

They should not again be deceived by those politicians's false promises and pretensions of concern for the poor and disenfranchised. As a group, they could influence the political, economic and social changes in our society today.

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Cordillera's untapped power potential

By Dolmar Carlito
Lt. Provided, Benguet

THE LOOMING POWER CRISIS brought about by the long dry spell has once again revived questions whether the Cordillera's reputation as the watershed cradle of Northern Luzon has been tapped or harnessed for power generation.

The Regional Development Council (RDC) acknowledges the capital due SD Alonzo Power Limited in rehabilitate and operate Ambuklao (75 megawatts) and Binga (100 MW) dams, Hedcor's initiatives to tap river systems for micro and mini hydros and other **independent power producers who rushed in** on small run-off river type of power plants.

But Jose Ngolab, RDC chair and Secretary of Economic and Development Authority (NedA) regional director, said there is a wide gap between actual investments and power generating potential.

Ngolab could not yet provide the exact amount of capital invested to tap the region's energy potential.

In an earlier briefing, Jamael Ocampo, acting assistant director of the Department of Energy's (DOE) energy resource development bureau, said the DOE recognized the Cordillera's power generating potential.

But he said investors have second thoughts of backstalling mines or mini hydro dams for fear that their businesses could get entangled with environment issues and ancestral land claims of indigenous communities.

But maybe the another driver is, said Ngolab, the region's reputation as a watershed cradle could go beyond paper.

11 watersheds

Consider the following features of the Cordillera:

- The region has 13 major watersheds where rivers flow into several water basins. The rivers could be tapped for micro and mini hydropower plants, while the basins have water available for major power plants.
- It has an estimated hydropower potential of 3,500 mW, which represents 27 percent of the country's potential power generating capacity. If fully developed, the region could supply 55 percent of the Luzon demand during peak hours.
- It has a current generating capacity of 207 MW from Binga Dam (100 MW), Ambuklao (75 MW) and 34 mW (17 MW). This excludes the Ambuklao Dam (75 MW), which is under rehabilitation.
- The critical part of the energy supply in Luzon would start this year. The DOE estimated that the increasing demand for Luzon would need an additional output of 3,900 MW to ensure power supply from 2010 to 2013.
- The region's hydro power potential could be found in the provinces...Abra (671 MW); Apayao (1,328 MW); Benguet (535 MW); Ifugao (134 MW); Kalinga (343 HPW), and Mt. Province (297 MW).
- The region is a major water supplier to the 360-MW Ilinga Dam in Isabela and the 345-MW San Roque Dam in Pangasinan.

Given this potential, Ilada said the region's provinces should have enough power when compared to the power it could generate.

Peak demand

The Cordillera's annual peak demand is 187.5 MW but this is only half of the current power it could generate (Abra, 7.1 MW; Benguet and Baguio, 92.2 MW; and Mt. Province, 2.9 MW).

But Ngolab said the interesting demand for power could exchanger the electric power industry in the region despite its vast potential.

He said the DOE earlier predicted that Luzon's power requirements would increase to 8,382 MW in 2006 to a critical level of 9,731 MW by 2010.

At a stopgap measure, Ngolab said the region must open wide its doors to big entrepreneurs developments than demand can meet, mini and small run of river type of generation plants since these types of plants have gained social acceptability and are considered environment friendly.

Until now, there are complaints against the decision of the National Power Corp. to expropriate the farms of Isabel Ismillan in Bokod and Roger Lacsamana in Ifugao to give way to the construction of Binga and Ambuklao dams in the 1950s.

The Chico River project, which the government scrapped due to opposition of Kalinga **villagers in the late 1970s, seven as a re**minder that big hydro power plants would not be welcomed by indigenous communities.

Local power firms

Right now, the Ifeda and IEDC association the establishment of local power corporations (LPC) where local governments would invest their own shareholders to operate a power plant.

The LPC was conceived as part of the reforms ramming fed under its Mini Hydro Power Development Extension Program (MHPDEP), which sought to harness local governments to power generation themselves.

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THE MAYOYAO River in Ifugao is one of the waterways that feed the major river systems in the Cordillera. Ifeda officials say the region's water resources have been largely untapped for power generation.

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Winning aquarelle artists

THE BAGUIO AQUARELLE SOCIETY (BAS), now on its second year, has had a good run since a handful of art teachers and students sat down for coffee at the Café by the Ruins in June 2008 to think if forming a watercolor group is feasible in a city awash with visual artists.

Apparently, their efforts to promote water-based media (watercolor, ink, acrylic, etc.) and painting outdoors (en plein air or the genre sur l'eau) are the open painting competition BAS cosponsored with the Cordillera News Agency at the Pinsan Botanical Sanctuary in Pinsan/Pinget in Baguio City. This six-hectare sanctuary is one of the few remaining forests in a city suffering from urban blight and a water shortage.

The 200 contestants, most of whom were first-time visitors to the sanctuary, were amazed at the thickness of the forest and the variety of flora and fauna, the subject of the session entitled "Pine and Bamboo, Bamboo and Pine." (The title was inspired by a reading of Japanese nature poet Basho who wrote that to write or learn about the pine, one must study the pine; the same for the bamboo, paraphrased even that Basho abundantly in Pinsan.)

On Monday, two boards of judges met to decide on the winners in the professional and amateur painting categories. National artist Bencab, Dr. Julie Lebrun and Norman Owen chose Hagen "Rabbah" Tabus's stamp pad watercolor fitting a jar with water as the first prize winner, followed by Gel Angel's monochromatic pen and ink of bamboo leaves as second and Clemente Indico's night and day in the Cordillera as third.

For the nonprofessional category, judges Antonio Patricio Cortés, Mavi Javier Dalisayo and Rizza Pelaez gave the Outside up to the entries of Gelli Anne Adonis Sesaon, first prize; Rony Lopez, second; and Nicolas Carlowell, third. The 1995 members decided to add a special prize to Ethel Cortes for her acrylic work showing spit bandanas and cradle-fastened bums.

The winning works will be exhibited, along with new paintings by BAS executives Roland Bin-ao, Cortés, Chow Balmaseda, Babeth Lebarga, Bets Manuel, Nelson Mendebaldo, Soonie Chanco Paste and Pelaez at the Baguio Art Province Museum on Gov. Pack Road, beginning March 6. The show will run till March 30. The members will also display their own personal presentation of the contest theme.

The contest and exhibition are the group's contribution in the celebration of the Baguio Centennial. Elizabeth Lebarga, Contributor

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Assistant Editor: Tony Bergonia

Across the NATION

Solution of '05 murder of Sta. Rosa mayor's dad draws near

LAMP VICENTE LIM, LAGUNA—Sta. Rosa City Mayor Arlene Arellano-Marasigan welcomed the arrest of a suspect in the murder of her father, ex-mayor Leon Arellano, saying she hoped it would lead to the solution of one of the country's most brazen political murders.

The late Mayor Arellano was gunned down on May 13, 2005 as he walked in the Sta. Rosa City Hall after officiating at the wedding of 12 couples. His assailants walked casually away after the attack.

On Sunday noon, members of the Laguna provincial police arrested Daniel Tinson, 36, in Barangay Ayala in Calauan, Quezon. He was one of the suspected masterminds in the late Mayor Arellano' murder.

Tinson was said to be related to the late Mayor Arellano' vice mayor-then, Joey Catindig.

The arrest was made on the basis of a warrant issued by Judge Teodoro Belin of Regional Trial Court Branch 25 in Biñan, Laguna.

"We in the family and the whole of Sta. Rosa are hoping the arrest of Tinson would finally put this case in a close," said Mayor Arellano-Marasigan.

"I have seen him (Tinson) probably once. He was from one of our villages, in Barangay Aplaya," said Arellano-Marasigan.

She said two other suspected masterminds remain at large.

Supt. Rodney Ramirez, Sta. Rosa City police chief, identified the other suspect as Edwin Barquerin but has yet to identify the other one.

Arellano-Marasigan was councilor in Sta. Rosa in 2004 and was elected mayor of the city in 2007.

During the attack, one of the assailants, who was described to be a woman, approached Arellano, drew out a .45-cal. pistol and shot the mayor in the head and abdomen.

Other gunmen who were with the main assailant shot Arellano' bodyguards, PO2 Erwin Rivera and PO3 Nancy Almendras. Rivera died on the spot while Almendras was wounded and survived the attack.

A dossier who allegedly ordered Arellano at that time, Elvis Bedia, said the late mayor's death was almost shortened. "The damage in his brain was just minimal," Bedia was quoted as saying.

The 2005 murder was the second attempt on the late Arellano' life. The first came in 2003 when, at a meeting of homeowners' groups in a village here, a motorcycle-riding gunman shot him. He was wounded in the thigh but survived the attack.

A task force was formed then to provide close security to the late Arellano' widow and his two children, including the sons Mayor Arellano-Marasigan, Albert Glen, 16, and Newsthere Lourne

New budget to paralyze ARMM–Adiong

Binay: Mindanao gets only 9% of money pie

A TOP OPPOSITION LEADER SAID MINdanao is getting only 9 percent but deserves a "pie-sized" 35 percent of the country's annual budget because it was the island's "alphabet source" of national income.

Jejomar Binay, Makati City mayor and candidate for vice president, said he saw national budgets should reverse "imperial Manila's neglect" of Mindanao.

He said the same share should apply to lump sums in the national budget, including funds for school buildings and allocations in the Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act.

"The bottom line is that 35 percent of unprojected and nondemonstrative overhead expenses of the national government should be given to Mindanao," said Binay in the statement.

Binay who has gone around the country to establish statehood ties between his city and the national government, said Mindanao would only receive about 9 percent of this year's estimated budget of P1.54 trillion.

"The national budget that Ms Arroyo signed last week contains obscene amounts for Mindanaoans which are non-commensurate to their contributions to the economy," Binay said.

He said the budget showed that Mindanao was getting only P140 billion this year.

DAVAO CITY—OFFICIALS OF THE AUTONOMOUS Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) yesterday protested a provision in the national budget that they said would restrict the flow of funds to and paralyze government operations in ARMM.

Anuarudin Adiong, acting ARMM governor, said the provision was "grossly punitive."

The provision in the General Appropriations Act (or national budget law) bars the release of more funds to ARMM "unless previous funds were audited by a special audit team."

It was put in the budget law apparently in reaction to reports of misuse of funds in the ARMM under the administration of Zaldy Ampatuan. ARMM governor who has been suspended and detained in connection with the Nov. 23 mass murder of 57 people in Maguindanao, a province part of ARMM.

The same provision also bars any lump sum funds being processed by those who took over the Ampatuans in running ARMM also requires the release of funds released to the region if these have not been liquidated, audited or have been disallowed by the special audit team.

Adiong said he was appealing for an audience with Ms Arroyo "before this fine becomes irreversible."

Adiong and other officials asked the President to veto the provision before the lapse of the 60-day period allowed by law for her to do so.

The Regional Legislative Assembly (RLA), the legislative body of the ARMM, and officials of five provinces under the autonomous government joined the call for Ms Arroyo to veto the provision.

Adiong was installed governor after the arrest of Ampatuan, who has a reputation for excessive spending.

After Ampatuan's arrest, Malacañang ordered a special audit of funds disbursed to ARMM during Ampatuan's incumbency.

The RLA is drafting a resolution to oppose the budget provision.

At least 78 percent of the region's budget goes to personnel services, 21 percent to maintenance and operating expenses and 1 percent to capital outlay. *Joselito Bacolla, Inquirer Mindanao*

VICTIMS of human rights violations under the Arroyo administration join relatives of the so-called Morong 43 at a protest in Camp Aguinaldo, the main headquarters of the Armed Forces of the Philippines. RENE ROYENA

'Morong 43' case brings fear to docs in Laguna

SAN PEDRO, LAGUNA—EVEN DOCTORS and health workers devoid of political affiliations have been alarmed by the arrest of 43 health workers whom the military tagged as communist rebels.

Dr. Romeo Sta. Maria, consultant at the Department of Perpetual Help System in Biñan and a member of the Laguna Medical Society, said the arrest of the so-called "Morong 43" has instilled fear among medical practitioners in Laguna, especially those who volunteer for mercy missions to remote rural areas.

The 43—composed of doctors, a nurse, a midwife and health volunteers—were arrested as they attended a training program in Morong, Rizal, on Feb. 6.

"If we move to conduct medical missions, we don't ask the patients if they are NPA, Sumabat," said Sta. Maria.

He said even if the latest find the people are not treating such a tribal, "there is more medicine we can NPA?"

"If the patient is a military man we'll also treat him, just the same," he said.

"So long as they needed help, we don't care who they are. It's part of our doctrine," he added.

Doctors swear by the so-called Hippocratic Oath which requires them not to discriminate against anyone who performing medical tasks.

According to Sta. Maria, Laguna nurses and health volunteers are now scared of joining medical missions. "I can't blame them," he said.

Sta. Maria's group brings free medical services, literacy and disaster-prepared. next training program to poor communities, especially after Tropical Storm "Ondoy" struck Laguna in September last year.

"Most of our Filipino doctors are now migrating abroad for higher pay. And for the few of us who decided to stay here, is this how they would treat us?" Sta. Maria said.

"What do these doctors get out of helping people? Nothing," he said.

He also asked the military to leave the medical service out of the counterinsurgency war.

Sta. Maria said members of the Philippine Orthopedic Society in Southern Tagalog, Philippine Academy of Family Physicians and other medical societies in Laguna are organizing themselves to support the campaigns but the 43 health workers.

"Is this martial law? They're doing it all over again," he said. *Marlowe Cleon, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

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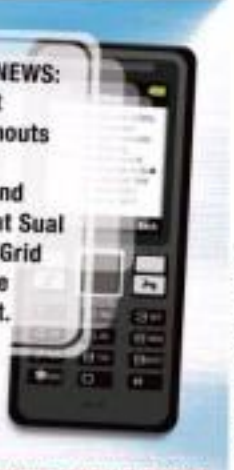

INQUIRER BREAKING NEWS: Meralco to implement 2-hour rotating brownouts in parts of Marikina, Manila, QC, Bulacan and Cavite due to outage at Sual power plant. National Grid Corp. has placed entire Luzon grid on red alert.

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Home of slain bet's kin demolished

By Carla P. Gomez
Inquirer Visayas

BACOLOD CITY—THE HOUSES OF 8 relatives of slain mayoral candidate and former mayor Luis Montilla Jr. in Pulupandan town and those of 10 others have been demolished Friday last week upon orders of the municipal government.

Montilla, who was running for mayor against Pulupandan Mayor Magdalena Peña, was killed near the Jaro Cathedral in Iloilo on Feb. 17 by suspected gunmen for hire.

Peña said on Monday that the demolition of the house of former Eduardo Papasin, captain of Barangay Zone 1-A and a cousin of Montilla, and those of 10 others are for reasons by town administrator Frederico Infante was based on a valid order.

Peña said these same houses were to be demolished in the area but occupants sought his help on he requested Infante, his relatives, to relocate them a few yards from their current location.

Peña said he has ordering and valid orders to demolish the homes of thousands of other squatters in the town but he has no plans of enforcing them for now.

"It depends on which side of the bed I wake up on," he added.

The widow of Montilla on Monday called for prayers for justice for her husband.

Mrs. Montilla arrived in Bacolod City Monday with the remains of her husband.

When asked if she believed the killing was politically motivated, Mrs. Montilla replied "What do think? Yes have sent how we have been harassed."

'It depends on which side of the bed I wake up on...'

The death of Montilla leaves Peña unopposed in his bid for reelection as mayor of the town, which was listed as a election hot spot.

Chief Insp. Joshua Villacin Jr., Pulupandan police chief, said police received reports of firecrackers being thrown at and exploding in the Montilla compound in Barangay Zone 2 in Pulupandan right after the murder of Montilla.

Around firecracker explosions were reported elsewhere in the town as if someone was celebrating Montilla's death.

As of Monday police were still in the hunt for two guns-for-hire identified through sketches made from the witnesses' testimony, according to Senior Supt. Ricardo de la Rta, Western Visayas police operations chief.

SPORTS
Editor Teddyvic S. Melendres
Assistant Editor Francis T.J. Ochoa

Hawks post rare victory in Salt Lake

SALT LAKE CITY—THE ATLANTA HAWKS won in Utah for the first time in 17 years, beating the wishermanned Jazz, 105-100, in Monday's NBA action.

Joe Johnson led Atlanta with 28 points, including 11 in the fourth quarter, and a three-pointer with 2:28 left that put the Hawks ahead to stay.

Josh Smith added 16 for Atlanta, which moved back within two games of first-place Orlando by beating Orlando.

"The Jazz lost for just the third time in 23 games and missed the opportunity to go equal top of the Southwest Division.

Playing without Deron Williams and Andrei Kirilenko, Utah stayed close until the final minute, but allowed the Hawks to shoot 54 percent.

In Dallas, Brandan Haywood tied a career high with 20 rebounds and Dallas improved to 4-0 with him as their starting center, beating Indiana, 95-92.

Haywood, who came from Washington in a trade this month, scored 13 points and added three blocks to anchor a defense that was struggling.

The Mavericks have held all five opponents since the trade to less than 100 points after the previous eight broke that mark.

Dirk Nowitzki's 25 points led Dallas, who opened a 21-3/2 game gap atop the Southwest Division.

T.J Ford led the Pacers with 21 points.

In Los Angeles, Russell Rocker scored 20 points to lead Los Angeles over Charlotte, 94-94.

Chris Kaman had 16 points and 13 rebounds for the Clippers, who have won consecutive games after starting 9-9 under interim coach Kim Hughes.

Drew Goodden and Trevor Ariza both made their debuts for the Clippers after joining them from Washington and Houston respectively before last Thursday's deadline.

In other games, Washington, Andray Blatche scored 25 points and had 11 rebounds to lead Washington over Chicago, 101-95 while in New York, Milwaukee made it three straight wins, beating pseudo-host New York, 103-97. AP

ALAIN Hollis of Adelaide and Kobi Co of Free C dispute the rebound during yesterday's match. AUSSIE HOOP CUP

Spirits eke out thrilling PBL 'Flex' triumph

By Jasmine W. Payo

HE FAILED TO EXECUTE THE GAME plan. But Joel Cadiaoas delivered something better.

Cadiaoas hurled a three-pointer over the outstretched arms of Jon Lucero as the dwindling seconds to zap Gerrick Rhay's comeback from 11 points down, giving the Spirits a thrilling 89-87 triumph over the Air-Conditioning Masters for a share of the lead in the PBL 2012 Pre-Season Pharmaton Cup opener on the 6000-Flying V arena in San Juan.

"That was not a part of our game plan but I'm glad he made the big shot," said Cadiaoas coach Bong Ramos.

The deciding shot that came in the final 5.1 seconds highlighted the game-long brilliance of Cadiaoas, who tied the Spirits with 22 points and six rebounds.

Veteran point guard Jun Sagadraca, Cadiaoas' former University of the East teammate, had a strong showing for the second straight game with 20 points and five assists.

Addible came out in full control behind Lizelan Armando in the final period to forge their first victory in two games with an 80-70 decision over Bora Cola the other match.

"It's good that we were able to bounce back from our tough (91-77) loss against Cebuana Lhuillier," said Addible coach Leo Isaac.

The Spirits joined elite Kaunlaran and Cebuana at 2-1.

The scorer
Carol Castillo
Jun Sagadraca
CEBUANA BLUE 89—Cadiaoas 22, Sagadraca 20, Montero 14, Baron 9, Abdon 6, Cuevas 5, Javier 5, Ramirez 4, Bautista 3, Mendoza 0, Bautista 0, Bautista 0, Bautista

Aces start RP Cup title duel vs Giants

By Cedrik F. Tupas

LONG THE TRADITIONAL POWERS OF THE BIGGEST BASKETball stage in the country, before teams awash in cash tilted the balance of league power—Alaska and Purefoods battle each other for the KFC PBA Philippine Cup and a shot at reclaiming their old, all-Filipino glory.

The Aces are seeking to end a 10-year all-Filipino title drought, a dry spell hardly noticed because of the franchise's successes through the years.

"It's been 20 years," said Alaska coach Tim Cone. "We want to go into the series hard as well and end an all-Filipino drought."

Purefoods, on the other hand, is eager to duplicate the feat scored by its 'do' forebearers in the very first year Asaw Meyo! monicker burst, whipped defenders down the line blocks.

"The All-Filipino title is all about pride," said Hipolito Gonzalo. "And we believe we still have an elite crew that can figure prominently in its All-Filipino 'do nada."

Both teams profess deep admiration for each other—the Ants marveled at the way the Border Jazz Giants toppled a formidable San Miguel Beer squad in the semifinals, while Purefoods also admires Alaska's execution of its seasoned triangle offense which worked almost perfectly in sweeping Sunday Gin Kings in the Final Four.

Now, both teams say, to figure out ways to topple each other for all the marbles in a tournament rich in history and drama.

A victory in the series will put Purefoods, which last won the All-Filipino title in 2000, level with Crispa with the riches in the tournament tournament. The Giants are also in their 13th All-Filipino final, a league record.

Alaska is seeking a third All-Filipino crown. Its last title came in the inaugural Fiesta Conference in 2000.

Alaska and Purefoods split their two games in the elimination round with the Giants swapping them 102-87 decision in the first round with a 91-77 decision last Jan. 15.

Both Cone and Gregorio agree that defense will spell the difference in the series.

"If there's one reason why we're here, it's defense," said Gregorio, whose team gave up a league-best 89.6 points per contest.

"It will come down to defense in the series," Cone said. "Purefoods counts on touch-grazed defense. Hopefully we can match them step for step."

Cone quickly dismissed the notion that the Ants have the advantage since they were able to get at least a seven-day rest for disposing of Cignitex in just four games.

The Giants, on the other hand, have played a league-high 20 games, seven more than the Ants, in the tournament.

"We don't want to get trapped in the thought that Purefoods is tired," said Cone. "We all saw what happened to San Miguel."

Gregorio is confident the Giants can overcome the fatigue factor in the series. "I think our will to win will be bigger than our weary legs," he said.

WITH a hand behind his back and his face an open target, Mark Anthony Borigo of Region 11 executes maneuvers to defeat Region 12's Arvee Bagunas during their boxing match yesterday at the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex.

NATIONAL GAMES

UP, Santo Tomas athletes boost NCR

By June Navarro

WINNER CARLA GIMARAGON OF THE University of the Philippines neared the gold medals while Semerina Salinas of the University of Santo Tomas became the first record breaker as action in the Offid National Games kicked off yesterday at the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex.

Gimbagon, last year's Palarong Pambansa bronze medalist, pushed the NCR triumph on top of the medal tally after rolling the women's 200-meter freestyle and 200-meter butterfly and anchoring her teams in the 400-M free relay.

Salinas clocked four minutes and 27.4 seconds in the women's 1500-meter run and smashed the UAAP record set by Bernardo Magsar of 4:39.2 set two years ago.

Philippine Sports Commission chair Harry Angping has pledged P10,000 for every record broken in the games organized by the Commission on Higher Education and backed by PSC, Smart, AMA and YTL.

Swimmer Marie Claire Adarna also shone for NCR after picking up wins in the women's 400m individual medley and 50m free.

"I really didn't expect to win because our team hardly had time for practice," said the 16-year-old freshmen, a public administration freshman.

Gimbagon is seeking to add two more golds today in her favorite event, the 800-meter freestyle, and 4x200-meter freestyle relay.

Sam Swim's Ferdinand Pegollana also shared the gold medal podium with Adarna and Gimbagon after reigning supreme in the men's 200-meter freestyle.

Other winners for NCR were Jules Simon (men's 100-meter breast), Neale Bangcale (men's 100-meter backstroke), Anne Marcador (men's 100-meter back), Jaclyn Jamin (women's 100-meter back) and former Batang Pinoy standout Ronald Allen Gaudia (men's 50-meter free).

The NCR team of Marcador, Simon, Wesley Reyes and Teodoly Gavino also bagged the men's 200-meter relay gold to round out the gold medalists for the Big City bets, who raked 11 of the 16 swimming events scheduled yesterday.

In karatedo, General Mariano also captained Cluss gold medals, courtesy of Ana Alberte dela Mano in the women's individual kata and the Cabuyao bets' victory in the men's and women's team kata events.

Hurting leg forces Pacman to slow down

By Ria Lustre

EVEN A FIGHTING MACHINE LIKE Manny Pacquiao needs to slow down sometimes.

The Filipino icon woke upon Saturday (Sunday in Manila) in Los Angeles feeling some pain on his left leg, according to a television news report Monday.

It did not deter Pacquiao, however, from promoting with his training regimen at the Wild Card Gym in Hollywood.

Of course, the slight shock in Pacquiao's system early did not escape the attention of master trainer Freddie Roach, who prevented him from doing extra work, and considering opponent Alex Arthur, who gave the favored leg a light, soothing massage right inside the ring.

Pacquiao's adductor was attributed to overworked muscles due to workouts and extensive preparations for his defense of the World Boxing Organization welterweight crown against Ghanaian Joshua Clottey on March 13.

Apart from a two-hour relentless workout at the gym, Pacquiao trains his day in Los Angeles by jogging and exercising. He still jogs even on Sundays before attending Mass.

It was business as usual for Pacquiao on Monday with boxers buddy Boboy Fernandez unexpectedly taking over the training duties from Roach, who had a bad cold and cough.

In another TV interview, Roach said Fernandez is a welcome presence since he knows the training patterns as well as the ring ways of Pacquiao.

For his part, Fernandez said there's nothing to worry about Pacquiao's condition as it is the pound is a normal occurrence at the height of his training for a fight.

Despite donning a body armor, Fernandez said he has still aches from the impact of Pacquiao's "controlled" punches.

PACQUIAO

Nonito will 'fight anybody' for crown

By Cedrik F. Tupas

NONITO DONAIRE JR. IS SO CERTAIN related to get a world title shot he's willing to move up one weight class to be multi-tier.

Donaire, the reigning interim WBA super-flyweight champion, yesterday raised the possibility of campaigning in the 122-lbs division for a fight against world champion Israel Vazquez or Rafael Marquez.

"If it's a world title, I will fight anybody," said Donaire during the PSA Forum yesterday at the Hadrey's 12th Avenue in Manila.

The 27-year-old Bicolano, who is coming off a knockout victory over Mexican Manuel Vargas last week, had earlier expressed his desire to fight Wladimir Fernando Montiel for the reigning WBO bantamweight champion's crown, although he is not discounting the possibility of staying at the 115-lbs division.

"I want Montiel because my goal this year is to win the world title," said Donaire, who was accompanied by his wife, Rachel, at the forum sponsored by Asael, Pepsi, Hadrey's and Cherkar Bakery.

Donaire fought once in 2008 and twice last year. Donaire looks to fight more than year than in the past two years. He is scheduled to fight against a still undetermined foe on March.

"I aim to back down to 115 but only for a big, big fight," he said, and that may involve a rematch with Vic Darchinyan or a fight against Jorge Arce. "The problem is there seems to be weak opponents among the 115 fighters."

Donaire said he is signing Venezuelans Robert Garcia and Jonathan Perdomo for his next fight.

"We have a very good dominator," he said.

Donaire said he is cutting down on carbohydrates outside boxing, as that he can undergo at least eight weeks of training for his next fight.

"I want a comfortable eight weeks of training," said Donaire, who also plans to be at Angeles when Filipino-ring icon Manny Pacquiao clashes with Ghanaian Joshua Clottey in Arlington, Texas, next month.

DONAIRE. Bantam world title

Light flyweights knock out Tinga Cup foes

By Ramina S. Acosta

FOUR LIGHT FLYWEIGHTS WON VIA referee stopped contests to highlight the second day of competition of the Lt. Danny O. Tinga Cup National Invitational Amateur Boxing Team Championships at the Cantada Sports Center in Tagaig over the weekend.

Pantin Pilacorte's Bala Lomisa Esmero stopped Parents' Wimp Medallo (1:31), Tagbilaran's Rondo Cardenas beat Tagaig's Mark Anthony Cabungcal (44 seconds), Mandaue's Michael Romanito ousted Mission Grimmell's Rene de Mesa (1:04) and Bandied's Gideon Ilingan defeated Mandaluyong's John Bustamante (22 seconds) all in the first round.

"We're getting a glimpse of the future of amateur boxing and it's really promising, judging from the way these young guys are performing," said organizer Filipe de Castro.

In the featherweight class, Tagbilaran's Jay Ann Rivera beat Mindoro's Jan Kevin Erbas (107-42), Tagaig's Rodjon Mandau edged Mandaluyong's Arvin Valdez (26-23), Puerto Princesa's Jhun Mervel walloped Bandied's Babes Maliwata (40-31) and Bacolod Ilingan beat Bataan' Arnan Bacho.

Featherweight division winners were Basilio Bolan of Mandaue, Stelin Salaba Jr. of Tagbilaran, Mizaeh Mijenitio of Puerto Princesa and Gherwin Gaerlan of Tagaig.

Albert Pagara of Min'Ds, Robert Empeng of Puerto Princesa, Mark Daniel Lumanlan of Tagaig and Noel Berson of Bacolod also advanced in the bantamweight class.

Clinching semifinal slots in the featherweight category are Nathaniel Bantolito of Puerto Princesa, Charlie Boy Verzabesa of Min'Ds, Mark Vincent Fernandez of Mandaue and Mecmer Gacillan of Tagbilaran.

The event, being held in honor of retired Justice Dante O. Tinga, is presented by the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office and supported by the City of Tagaig and Cantada Sports Association with the Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines-NCR.

SPORTSWATCH

Uy rules Pasay 'Big Event'

JAMES JOY OF IRONE EMERGED AS SOLE champion and Friday in Pasay City Cockpit's well-attended "Dancing Big Pasay 2010 K Big Event 4-Cock Derby."

After 67 fights, Uy's 45 Achilleus Lara was the top scorer with Ironsite and runner-up Jaguilar (Bumagsak) 14 received a silver cup from Mayor and PCC chairwoman Pamela Pastor Antonio.

The PCC will also host the $25K 4-cock derby on Feb. 28, with P300,000 at stake.

'Rambulan' at SJC

AS THE MANILA LEAGUE OF BOWLERS wrapped up the elimination of the PBA Rambulan at San Juan LP.

Today's elimination round will feature some 70 fights. In last Monday's event, three cocks posted perfect scores of three wins each.

For details, call 7250384 and 7250382.

Shock troopers key to PAL Interclub victory

By Manang R. Castillo

BACOLOD—HOW THE SHOCK TROOPERS DELIVER FOR SITHER Cashdawg or The Country Club will be the key starting today as cornerpiece Moy's action in the 42nd Philippine Airlines Interclub gets off the ground at the Marapara layout here.

The Negor Barons are their "first pear" drive in motion with a team anchored on Mark Fernando and Josel Hinlo, but coach Tommy Manotoc believes that the reserves, not the aces from each team, will spell the difference.

"It will basically be the third or fourth man," Manotoc told the boysers shortly after practice. "We may be solid, but they have a solid core, too. And this will be the key, when the third and fourth seven are counted."

Both squads remained tight-lipped as to who will start, but Cashdawg will surely be fielding in rookie Jobin Lachu together with Paul Echarez and Alvin Singian, as to-caddy at Marapara who seem to prove something on his homecourting.

Lachu and Echarez were the ones who practiced for Cengoll at the Marapara, but surely, the Barons could be fielding one of their aces to Day 1 to get a head start.

"More than anything, leading after the first round would be a big morale booster for any team," Manotoc said. "So yes, it's important that you get a good start."

Engine was banned by club officials from even playing to his former course over some disagreements and the 28-year-old's bombarding with the course is something which Manotoc said he would like to look on.

The Country Club has an edge in that department, with JR Tropicos, who also serves as a coach, and another ex-caddy in Erwin Madrilejos browsing every bump and roll at the layout.

"This match will be decided by experience and the second veteran—where Cashdawg has the advantage," said The Country Club skipper Freddie Mendiara.

"We are actually a development team that's why we are younger and inexperienced."

And they would seem to erase latter memories of that setback with the new stars of the team hoping to make up for losing former RP Amateur champions Freddie Mateo and Anthony Fernando to the professional ranks.

While Cashdawg is expected to unveil 12-year-old Super Sangreta in 46holes on Thursday, TCC could be outfitting 15-day rookie Carl Ocampo right in the first day.

Ocampo is a new varsity rooting out of Notre Dame in Indiana and based on his practice round at Manila, he truly has great potentials.

FERNANDO

Ryan: Cone smarter than Phil Jackson

MULTI-TITLED PBA COACH Tim Cone did not expect Purefoods to be in the championship round of the ongoing IOC-PBA Philippine Cup.

In so many words, the Master motivator admitted during the pre-finals press conference held at the posh Gateway Suites of the Araneta Mall in Cubao, that he had been preparing for a championship encounter with Star Miguel Beer, so he seemed for the semifinal round to end.

"I only started preparing for Purefoods when the series went 2-2 in favor of Purefoods, and with three finals scenario formed," said Tim.

Tim describes his finals opponent as "long, tall and quick, a team that goes to the boards very well, a team that rotates and covers for each other."

He said he's still figuring out how to play the Dutch.

* * *

Actually, Ryan said the same thing, although at this point, both tacticians must already have their book-game plans.

In this series, the experts—except for Tim—agree that Purefoods is the underdog.

"If they (Purefoods) figured out San Miguel three, they could figure us out," Tim said.

* * *

Two years ago, the Boston Celtics beat the heavily-favored Los Angeles Lakers to end a long title drought.

The Lakers, under coach Phil Jackson, won the triangle offensive, which Celtic adopted for the next.

But no, Ryan said he was not going to take his cue from the Celtics because he believes Tim is a smarter coach than Jackson.

Anyway, both coaches agreed it was a game of adjustments with neither team having a big advantage over the other.

The pressure concluded, I tried to catch up with James Yap to inquire about the condition of wife Kris, who was confined at the Makati Medical Center for four days after she slipped while taking a shower and hit her head hard on the floor.

I was going to ask James if Kris would be well enough to watch the finals games, but the topic was too hot for me.

I tried to call and text him but I was using an unfamiliar number, so he never answered.

* * *

Perhaps the competition was not in favor of the others he has experienced before.

Mikee Reyes of the Alibaba Philippine Stallions said he found the championship game against Indonesian's Xiamen Macho Srintexus most thrilling.

IN HUDDLE

Beth Celis

All because of the hostility of the predominantly pro-Indonesian crowd.

"Imagine, out of the 4,000 spectators inside the venue, only about a hundred were pro-Philippines. They were throwing bottled water at us. Fortunately, nobody got hit," Mikee, who interned in the winners of the SEA Games, told reporters.

Mikee is also a member of the Alibaba Philippine Stallions.

* * *

HOOPSTER: PAC swimming team head coach Dale Evangelista, a SEA Games alter ego, at in some jobs, is running for councilor in the first district of Tondo, where he is currently a captain in one of the barangays.

Coming up on Saturday, 10, 27 is the Jenny Henna all-star hoops (Antonio Lo) at the Blue Eagles Open at Ateneo. The event features a training camp for adults and kids to be conducted by coaches Yeng Guiao, Eric Altamirano, Alex Compton, Bonnie Tiburcio, Aja Lantion and Charlie Inso. Capping the one-day affair is a game between the 2009 Blue Eagles and the Norman Black-mentored ABL team composed of ex-players and coaches.

Loyola and Union Surge to the Top

By: Joson Jamberg

The drama continues in the UFL as Union Rudy Project and Loyola ATR KenDing both made their intentions clear for the inaugural league title with impressive wins over Green Archers Orient Freight and Manduia E-Gamers, respectively.

Union Rudy Project were particularly impressive, notching up their second successive win by decimating the La Salle-based club 6-0 with utter dominance and increasing confidence. This latest victory lifts the club to second in the standings, level on points with leaders Air Force, but trailing on goal difference.

Loyola ATR KenDing have surged to third place in the league with a surprising lopsided 3-0 victory over home side Manduia E-Gamers, much to the disappointment of the San Beda College crowd. Manduia player Marion Solas compounded his side's misery with a violent outburst, striking two Loyola players, and subsequently being shown a red card for his troubles. A suspension of three games is expected to be slapped for his unsporting behavior.

The result – nevertheless is a perfect response to the heartbreak of losing to arch-rivals Green Archers Orient Freight in their previous match, and makes Loyola serious contenders for the title.

The race for glory is getting even tighter at the top as more teams settle into the fast-paced nature of the league. And next week, as the first round nears its end, titans will clash in a mouth-watering weekend of matches.

Kaya Digjamir attempts to rescue their season when they face coach-less (suspended) Navy Selecta at AB-Core, while Loyola ATR KenDing attempts to sustain their run when they lock horns with Army Philter at Normats. And the top two clubs in the league will clash in the main event, with Union Rudy Project and Air Force Rider battle it out to see who will go top in the UFL. Check www.footballalliance.com.ph for full fixtures and results. This is the UFL. It's OUR Game!

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'WE MAINTAIN THERE IS NO GROUND TO REVOKE HIS LICENSE'

Kho files final appeal

By Tina G. Santos

STRESSING THAT THERE WAS no basis for the revocation of his medical license, controversial cosmetic surgeon Dr. Hayden Kho Jr. has filed another appeal before the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC).

"There was no offense committed. If there was, it's not in connection with the exercise of his profession," Kho's lawyer, Lorna Kapunan, told the Inquirer. "We maintain that there is no ground to revoke his license."

The PRC Board of Medicine earlier denied the task of much a motion filed by Kho seeking the reversal of its previous decision to permanently strip him of his medical license for "committing immorality as well as dishonorable and unethical conduct."

"They (Kho's camp) filed last week a notice and memorandum of appeal with my office questioning the board's earlier decision as well as its denial of their motion for reconsideration," said Pharmex Alamada, head of the PRC legal division.

"They were claiming that there were errors committed by the board in promulgating the decision," he said, adding that Kho's appeal would be taken up.

Should the PRC again deny Kho's latest appeal, he may elevate his case to the Court of Appeals or the Supreme Court, Alamada added.

Kho earlier argued that the board did not observe due process when it decided on his case. He also claimed that the issues discussed by the board's doctrine were not taken up during the pre-trial.

ANTIMEASLES DRIVE

A woman reacts as her son cries after he receives a measles vaccine at a health center in Manila. The health department earlier warned of a measles outbreak in certain areas in Metro Manila. N.C. Baja

GMA asked to donate lot to Muslims

By Nitz Cabuja

A GROUP OF MUSLIM REBEL clerics has asked President Macapagal-Arroyo to turn over to their community a 2.8-hectare property in Barangay Pasay City on which their mosque stands.

"The Muslims are appealing to the President to exhaust legal venues in arrive at an amicable settlement because they will defend the mosque against demolition in whatever way they can," Imam Musa Ramaga, a Muslim priest, said in a statement sent to the lawmen.

The Pasay City government earlier said it intends to transform the reclaimed land into a public transport terminal equipped with modern amenities.

Final solution

Abdulmenaan Tamondong, head of the battalion ng Maghahatanong Hukbondala sa Roxas Boulevard, said only Mindanao could find the problem over the disputed property by donating it to residents in the area.

Though a letter, the group also asked the President to instruct Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita to withdraw a memorandum in which he ordered government agencies to relocate the mosque to a 5000-sq m lot in Panahaque City.

In November, policemen and volunteers of the Pasay City government drove residents out of the property by demolishing their homes. The mosque, however, which stands near Bethany Church, was left standing.

Nongovernment groups said Muslims earlier said that inring the mosque remain where it was could serve as a symbol for national harmony between Christians and Muslims.

"If the President will heed our call, this act of donation will be her legacy to us. And we, the Muslim residents around the mosque, will be forever grateful to her," Tamondong said.

SUMMER FUN
Two boys clamber up statues displayed on Roxas Boulevard, Manila. MIKE CLEMENTE

Mercado: Binay has my vote for vice president

By Nitz Cabuja

ALTHOUGH HE AND MAYOR Mayor Jejomar Binay may have parted ways due to political differences, Vice Mayor Ernesto Mercado said his former ally has his vote for vice president.

"My conscience says I should vote for him because he is still my friend," Mercado told reporters yesterday.

He said that should Binay, who is running with former President Joseph Estrada, win in the May elections, this would benefit the city.

Mercado was Binay's staunch ally for three terms, serving beside him as his vice mayor.

The two, however, parted ways after Binay allegedly reneged on his promise to support Mercado for mayor in the coming polls.

Mercado claimed that after convincing him to run, Binay suddenly backtracked and decided to field his son, Councilor Jejomar Erwin Binay Jr., instead.

The mayor, however, said that it was Mercado who broke their alliance by talking to other political groups behind his back.

"Jejo Binay has been my idol. I wouldn't have learned with him if this were not the case. But our relationship changed when he began aspiring for the presidency," Mercado said.

He added that the elder Binay was one of the country's best mayors. "You can see that by how he changed Makati," he added.

The mayor, however, started distancing himself from Mercado when the latter told him frankly that he would not win should he run for the presidency or the vice presidency, Mercado said.

"Why not run for senator instead, I told him," he said.

Asked for his reaction, Lito Atienza, the mayor's spokesperson, dismissed Mercado's statement as mere double-talk.

"He lambasts the mayor during Ermita. He makes baseless allegations against the mayor in public. Sir, in front of the media, he runs around and says something differently. this is nothing but propaganda," Atienza said.

ROASTED TREAT
A woman splurges on a summer treat: roasted corn sold in front of Quiapo Church in Manila. MIKE CLEMENTE

Manila gov't preparing heroes' welcome for boxing champs

By Tina E. Santos

THE MANILA CITY GOVERNment is getting ready to give Filipino boxers Manny Pacquiao and Bernabe Concepcion a heroes' welcome this week.

Sir de Guzman, Mayor Alfredo Lim's chief of staff, said preparations were underway for a motorcade that would carry the victorious boxers around the city's streets.

De Guzman said Donaire and Concepcion would be paraded in separate vehicles so as to allow fans and supporters in the city show their gratitude and glimpse the new Filipino boxing heroes.

Worthy of emulation

"The courage and determination shown by Donaire and Bernabe in the ring to be able to bring glory to the country is worthy of emulation," Lim said in a statement.

Donaire and Concepcion both knocked down their opponents during their recent fights held in Las Vegas.

Recently lauded as the new World Boxing Association's interim super flyweight champion, Donaire downed his Mexico opponent Manuel Vargas in the third round of their 12-round bout via an uppercut, enabling him to keep his WBA interim 122-pound belt.

On the other hand, Concepcion was declared as the new World Boxing Organization bantamweight champion after defeating his Puerto Rican opponents in the middle round of their fight.

Composers ask NBI to probe alleged anomalous use of group's ₱8.5-M fund

By Jeannette I. Andrade

A GROUP OF COMPOSERS LED by artist Ryan Cayabyab yesterday asked the National Bureau of Investigation to investigate the allegedly questionable use of some P8.5 million worth of funds by officials of the Filipino Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers Inc. (Filscap).

Barcelona said in his complaint that "hundreds of composers (were) now prejudiced, damaged and injured" by what he called the fraudulent disbursements made by officials of the organization, particularly Ricky Tarrosa, licensing manager Maria Jane Suarez-Castillo.

He called on NBI Special Task Force (STF) head agent Arsel Dalampasan to investigate Suarez, Filscap Board of Trustees chair Ronny Tan, its president Ramon del Rosario and general manager Debra Lim Gatu.

Barcelona claimed that Filscap officials have refused to look into the disbursements because it would be "farcical and prejudicial to their (group's) image."

Filscap is responsible for collecting royalties for the public performance rights of its members and members of foreign affiliates, including the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (Ascap), Broadcast Music Inc. (BMI), Composers and Authors Society of Hong Kong (CASH) and more than 16 other organizations.

Barcelona claimed that a general financial audit of Filscap accounts from January to December 2008 and a probative audit for transactions before the period showed that a total of around P8.5 million was disbursed allegedly without authorization from the group's board of trustees and paid to Marie Jane Suarez-Castillo.

"When this audit report came out as early as Feb. 8, 2008, I was shocked, dismayed [at] [an] exposition from the board of trustees in my capacity as one of its members. Surprisingly, since then to date, nothing of substance has been done," the complaint said.

He added, "What are in-volved here are not merely the funds held in trust by the trust agreement of Filscap for its members, but also the funds due to foreign affiliates like Ascap and CASH, among others."

Barcelona also said he found it highly suspicious that the group's chairman of the board refuses to conduct a serious probe of the allegedly questionable disbursements made to Suarez and Lim Suarez.

"Worse, he (Tan) threatened with suspension or expulsion any officer or member of Filscap who presents in forming this matter investigated under the subaltern claim that it is intimidated and prejudicial to the image of the [group]," he added.

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Kho files . . .

From page A23

The board, however, denied his appearance to its order dated Feb. 8.

"All the issues resolved in the decision were necessarily included in the issues posed in the pre-trial order dated July 18, 2009. Respondent was given an opportunity to answer all the issues in the decision," it said.

The petition to revoke Kho's medical license was based on a complaint filed by actress Katrina Halili who had accused him of videotaping their sexual encounter without her knowledge and consent.

The videos, including some showing Kho in intimate situations with other women, were later uploaded on the Internet.

Halili had said in her petition before the PRC that she wanted to prevent the doctor from preying on other women who would be his patients.

Kho was suspended in January, but his case prior to the Philippine Medical Association "for conduct offensive to the profession."

He is also facing a malpractice suit which was filed by Halili. In addition, the National Bureau of Investigation has charged him with sexual violence for videotaping his intimate encounters with the actress.

The case is still pending before the Department of Justice.

METROBRIEFS

Asistio can run, says Supreme Court

THE SUPREME Court has cleared the way for former Caloocan businessman Lem "Barby" Asistio to run for city mayor as it ordered the setting aside of a lower court's ruling ordering the removal of his name from Caloocan's list of qualified voters. The high court en banc granted Asistio's petition for a "status quo" order (SQO) in a resolution penned by Associate Justice Mariano del Castillo. "This resolution is not (for) mayor[,]," Marquez said. Asistio brought his case to the high court after the Caloocan Regional Trial Court dismissed his appeal to reverse Metropolitan Trial Court presiding Judge Arthur Malabaguio's order to remove his name from the city's list of voters. Malabaguio's ruling was based on his finding that Asistio had given a false address when he filed his certificate of candidacy for mayor. Jenny Rustia-Dagoon

Councilor pushes for more funding for elderly

A QUEZON City councilor is pushing for the allocation of one percent of the total annual budget of barangays for the elderly. Councilor Feldrado Malangen said the setting aside of a portion of the annual budget was provided for in a 2009 Department of Budget and Management circular. The circular directs all government agencies, local government departments, office of state colleges and similar organizations to remark part of their total allocation for programs, projects and activities concerning senior citizens. Malangen pointed out that elderly residents need attention to promote and convey their concerns through community-based projects and activities. Julie M. Aurelio

45th Anvil Awards set on Feb. 26

THE PUBLIC Relations Society of the Philippines (PRSP) will hold the 45th Anvil Awards on Feb. 26 at the Iris Ballroom of Edsa Shangri-la in Mandaluyong City. Of the 292 entries—the biggest number throughout the society's more than 50 years—only 114 will receive awards after passing gates through a two-stage screening and evaluation process, said Ed Monzon, Anvil Awards chair. Seven among the PR programs and tools the jurors chose the Grand Anvil and Brain Awardees. Dr. Celyatan P. Pedroncillo, former socioeconomic planning chief and UP economics professor, chaired the 22-member jurors board who represented the academe, media, government and private companies, and civil society. He will also defend the top winning PRSP board of directors led by PRSP president Glenn Raquel of GMA 7. For ticket inquiries, call the PRSP Secretariat at 8208815 and 8208816.

Indon stands trial over hotel bombings

JAKARTA—A FORMER INDONESIAN student of an alleged al-Qaeda commander likewise linked to the Jemaah Islamiya terrorist network has been arraigned in connection with the twin Jakarta bombs that he hoped would be the biggest terrorism act since Sept. 11, 2001, a prosecutor said on Tuesday.

Chief Prosecutor Fetnar Syah made the allegations in opening his case in the South Jakarta District Court against Muhammad Jibriel Abdul Rahman, a flamboyant 25-year-old who once called himself the "Prince of Jihad" on his radical Islamic website.

Police arrested Rahman more than a month after the July 17, 2009, attacks on the JW Marriott and Ritz Carlton hotels that killed seven and injured more than 50. He faces a maximum 15 years in prison if convicted of helping facilitate a terrorist act by concealing information.

Rahman, who came to court wearing a black shirt and jeans and flanked by more than a dozen men wearing black jackets emblazoned with "Imigrasi Soekarno," said he was innocent.

"I think this case is fabricated. I didn't do anything wrong," Rahman said shortly before his trial began.

Defense lawyer Achmad Michdan said the government's case was weak, adding his client would apply on a panel of three judges to dismiss it when the trial resumes next week.

Syah alleged that Rahman studied at an Islamic boarding school in Malaysia in 1998 where he first met Malaysian-born Noordin Top, an alleged terrorist mastermind blamed for a string of deadly bombings before he was shot dead in a police raid in September last year. In 1998, Noordin was a teacher at Rahman's school.

The indictment says Rahman met Noordin about a year before the hotel bombings. After that meeting, it says Rahman sent an e-mail to his brother, Ahmad Jaroll Shachibul, who was in the Israeli holy city of Hebron, saying, "I have met with N, we talked for a long time in a car ... Preacher N needs 100 million."

While not detailing a plot, Rahman allegedly set out in another plan that sent "the biggest since the WTC"—a reference to the World Trade Center twin towers that were brought down by hijacked airliners.

Rahman and another suspect in the bombings, Syaifuddin Zuhri, then flew to Mexico to arrange terrorism financing, the indictment alleges. Zuhri was later killed in a police raid. The indictment did not specify how much money they raised and otherwise any reached Noordin.

Michdan said the prosecution case on the terrorism charge was weak because the e-mail was the only evidence. "Even the prosecutors say this e-mail is difficult to understand," he told reporters outside the court.

Police killed nine suspects and arrested more than a dozen in the hotel bombing investigation. Rahman was only the third of 11 charged so far to go to court. AP

The trials of Noordin's alleged driver, Amir Abdillah, and an alleged accomplice, Aris Sumaryo, began on Feb. 18.

Abdillah was charged with concealing information about the alleged bombing plot as well as plans to assassinate Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono. Police arrested the alleged conspirators before an attempt was made on the president's life.

Sumaryo was charged with harboring terrorists, including Noordin.

Rahman was supported in court by his father, hardline cleric Abu Jibril, who was caught in the same school as Noordin and was deported from Malaysia following the Sept. 11 attacks on the United States.

"There is no reason for accusing him of helping terrorism," the father said.

"I once faced a similar case, so this is nothing new to us," he added, referring to his time in Malaysian custody before he was deported without charge. AP

Some say suicide tax attack made pilot a hero

MOST Americans saw Joseph Stack as a misguided man when he crashed his plane last week into a tax office in Austin, Texas, but Stack's suicide mission drew sympathy from antitax, antigovernment extremists. —AP

DALLAS—FLAMES INSIDE STILL STEWING from the building where the suicide pilot who crashed his plane into the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) office in Austin, Texas, was being hailed in some corners as a hero who struck a courageous blow against the tyranny of the United States tax code.

While most Americans naturally saw Joseph Stack as an angry, misguided man whose final act was repugnant, his suicide mission has clearly tapped a vein of rage among antitax, antigovernment extremists.

The way they see it, "he made it to the roof, and they lost that," said Al Machnik, a Morehead-based insurance analyst who is writing a book about his profession.

It is not surprising Stack would be portrayed as a hero on fringe websites such as freedomlies.org, a forum for white supremacists. But observers also see progressive-left appreciation on mainstream sites such as Facebook, where tax page supporting some of the things Stack said in his suicide note numbered more than 3,000 members on Monday.

Stack, 53, left behind a rambling, 3,000-word suicide note in which he raised about his financial troubles, his difficulty finding work in Austin and his hatred of big businesses. Bluntly, though, he focused on his clashes with the IRS, including new ideas he hailed as like a tax revolt because he said he had no income. Stack raised his problems to a 1986 change to the tax code affecting software consultants like him.

In Texas, Republican gubernatorial candidate Debra Medina told a San Antonio radio station last week she did not sympathize with Stack, but that his act reflected "the hopelessness many in our society feel."

"There is a unease in all of our country that we are not on the right path," she said.

Asked whether she considered her father a hero, Stack's adult daughter, Samantha Dawn Bell, said during a telephone interview broadcast on Monday on ABC television's "Good Morning America" "Yes, because now maybe people will listen."

But she stressed that her father's actions were "inappropriate."

Later, though, in an interview with The Associated Press in Norway where she lives, she said she did not consider her father a hero.

She said she understood her father's animosity toward a "leaky" and "unbalanced" American tax system. But she said he should have found "a completely different way" to address it.

"Write letters—that's what he should have done, rather than actually doing what he did," she said.

Threats against IRS employees have steadily increased in the past five years, climbing from 434 in fiscal 2005 to 1,034 threats in 2008, according to J. Russell George, the treasury department's inspector general for tax administration.

"The new commissioner of the Internal Revenue Service has made it clear, and rightfully so, that people who owe the IRS money should pay the money they owe," George said. "That activity, coupled with the economy as well as a general sense of unease, have caused people to react in ways we all hoped they would not." AP

Thrill-seekers turning to designer abduction

PARIS—THRILL-SEEKERS IN France tired of the usual array of adrenaline-fueled sports are turning to a bizarre new service to get their adrenaline rush—designer abduction.

For $1,230, clients of Ultime Realite ("Ultimate Reality"), a firm in eastern France, can buy a basic kidnap package where they are handcuffed, gagged, and gagged, and kept unanswered for four hours.

Alternatively they can opt for a more elaborate faux-mafia psychodrama, involving an escape on helicopter chase for example, where costs run quickly skyward.

"Basically, anything is possible. I identify what the customer wants and then try to put it into action," said Georges Cesar, 28, who set up the company in the middle of January.

Since the scenario has been established, clients sign a contract and liability waiver, but have no idea when the kidnappers will strike in order to maximize the surprise.

But Cesar said the maximum incarceration time was 11 hours, beyond which clients might find the experience verging on torture.

After just a few months in business, Ultime Realite says it is already getting up to one request a day, the majority from top level executives seeking an extreme alternative to bungee jumping or skydiving.

Cesar said he was hoping to combine deep-rooted phobias, such as one potential client who says he wants to be buried alive.

"Let's say it will really be about bringing to life the client's worst fear, the thing that's lurking in the back of his mind and that's never dared talk about," said Cesar. Reuters

WorldBriefs

Incidence of diabetes rising in poor countries

HONG KONG—Diabetes and its complications—such as strokes and heart disease—will place an enormous financial burden on poorer countries in years to come, researchers warned in a report published on Tuesday. "Diabetes is nearing how being a disease of developed countries to a disease of developing countries like India and China, and this could put pressure on healthcare systems through rising healthcare costs," said Philip Clarke, associate professor at University of Sydney's School of Public Health. Reuters

Thousands give last rites to dead whale in Vietnam

NHA TRANG—Thousands of fishermen gathered in a southern fishermen village to pay homage at a funeral for the creature they call "Your Excellency." Nearly 10,000 people have come to see Ba Ong Ca (whale in Vietnamese) in the 16-meter whale since he was dragged ashore on Monday. They burned incense in his honor and planted his body a hillside at the site of his burial, which was scheduled for Tuesday. AP

Superman's debut comic book sells for $1M

NEW YORK—A rare copy of the first comic book featuring Superman sold on Monday for $1 million, smashing the previous record price for a comic book. A 1938 edition of Action Comics No. 1, widely considered the holy Grail of comic books, was sold by a private collector to a private buyer, neither of whom released their names. The issue features Superman lifting a car on its cover and originally cost 10 cents. AP

Obese Americans have obese pet dogs

NEW YORK—Someone once said that if your dog is fat you're not getting enough exercise. So it's no surprise that as human obesity rates soar, experts have linked increasing ranking on the pounds as well. "Overweight people are more likely to have overweight dogs," said Victoria Stilwell, dog trainer and author of "Tal Dog Bible: How to Have a Healthy, Happy Pet." Over 34 percent of people in the United States are considered obese, according to the National Center for Health Statistics. Most estimates say up to 40 percent of household pets are overweight. Reuters

Tiger Woods puts 'sex addiction' on spotlight

CHICAGO—GOLFER TIGER WOODS' admission that he is undergoing therapy after having adulterous affairs has focused attention on the issue of sex addiction, a condition some experts say is becoming much more common.

But sex addiction is a controversial concept not currently recognized in any official diagnosis in the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, considered the definitive word on psychological disorders.

Dr. Rory Zucker of the University of Toronto, who heads a working group drafting the next edition of the manual, said he rejected "hypersexuality disorder" to be listed.

"Certainly a lot of clinicians believe there is a clinical phenomenon of people who experience a level of distress or get into a lot of trouble from having excessive sex," Zucker said.

"Anything in the sex and gender domain is controversial. Everyone has an opinion about sex. These issues raise the boundary between what's normal and what isn't...and where do you draw the line," he said.

A number of clinics—among them one in Mississippi where Woods has been reported to be receiving treatment—have sprung up to treat sex addiction.

People undergoing this treatment have included celebrities such as actor David Duchovny. The United States cable TV channel VH1 recently ran a series "Sex Rehab With Dr. Drew" focusing on celebrities undergoing treatment for sex addiction.

Some psychologists opposed to condoning recognition on a diagnosis of "sexual addiction" describe it as a habit or a compulsion akin to gambling—and not an addiction that has a direct impact on brain chemistry.

"Sex addiction by itself is not a diagnosis we currently use," said Craig Finkelhaus, a psychologist at Hackensack University Medical Center in New Jersey.

"It's like a lot of patterned behaviors that could be better described as obsessive-compulsive issues," he said.

"Are people in a loving relationship overaroused? Is loving sex a sign of addiction? If it feels good, you do it. A chronic adulterer who gets caught might hide behind the term sexual addiction," Finkelhaus said.

Nevertheless, treating someone who has numerous sex partners might be similar to treating a drug addict—prescribing medication to calm anxiety and talk therapy to learn techniques to handle the urge, Finkelhaus said.

Therapists who specialize in sex addiction say it is comparable to substance abuse and not merely a case of habitually accepting offers from people to dine out.

TIGER WOODS gets a kiss from his mother after making his first public appearance on Friday. REUTERS

Woods made his first public appearance on Friday since revelations of repeated marital infidelity raised him in controversy in November last year.

In his comments, the superstar golfer never explicitly identified the reason he was receiving therapy or detailed the type of treatment he was undergoing.

"For 45 days from the end of December to early February, I was in inpatient therapy receiving guidance for the issues I'm facing. I have a long way to go. But I've taken my first steps in the right direction," Woods said.

He referred to "repeated irresponsible behavior," saying, "I was unfaithful. I had affairs. I betrayed."

"When people who are genetically predisposed to addiction get hit by an addictive substance like cocaine or sex, it can grab them," Schwartz said.

"It's similar to drug and alcohol addiction in terms of the progression of it: sneaking around, having consequences, and engaging in the behavior despite the consequences," added Pittsburgh therapist Sandra Davis.

Frank Ryan, president of Addiction Healers Group of New York, who works with substance abusers, said of Woods' behavior: "No addiction is an addiction. It's like an illness, yet he contributed to do it. He knows he would get caught. There's a piece of that that feels like insanity."

Experts said help was available from such groups as Sexaholics Anonymous and Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous, which borrow strategies from similarly named groups aimed at substance abusers who are intent on quitting. Reuters

The WORLD

Editor Lorenzo B. Gozo

Nato commander says sorry to Afghans

MOVING AFP soldiers from Taliban fighters, US Marines make slow progress in their offensive in the insurgent stronghold of Marjah. —AFP

KABUL—THE COMMANDER OF United States and Nato forces in Afghanistan took his apology for a weekend air strike that killed civilians directly to the Afghan people on Tuesday, with a video in which he pledged to work to regain their trust as Nato countries mass offensive against the Taliban in the south.

US Marines and Afghan ground troops pushing from the north and south of the insurgent stronghold of Marjah finally linked up after more than a week, creating a direct route across the town that allows convoys to supply communication and reinforcements.

In the video, translated into the Afghan languages of Dari and Pashto on a Nato website, a stern Gen. Stanley McChrystal apologizes for the strike in central Uruzgan province that Afghans officials say killed at least 23 people.

Sunday's attack by Nato jets on a convoy of cars was the deadliest attack on civilians in six months and prompted a sharp rebuke from the Afghan government. It comes as Nato is struggling to win public backing for a major military offensive against the Taliban in the south with a strategy that involves taking all precautions possible to protect civilians.

The civilian deaths occurred as 15,000 Nato, US and Afghan soldiers were in their 10th day of fighting insurgents in the southern town of Marjah in Helmand province. The resistance is cruel the Taliban, set up a local government and rush in aid to win public support.

The alliance said in photos fired on what was thought to be a group of insurgents in Uruzgan province on their way to attack Nato and Afghan forces. Interior ministry spokesperson Zemarai Bashary said the air strike hit three minibuses, which were traveling on a under road near Uruzgan's border with Day Kundi province.

"I pledge to strengthen our efforts to regain your trust to build a brighter future for all Afghans," McChrystal said in the video. "I have instituted a thorough investigation to prevent this from happening again," he added.

McChrystal apologized directly to President Hamid Karzai on Sunday shortly after the air strike.

Although the air strike was not related to the Marjah offensive, civilian casualties have undermined Nato's goal of 'winning back the Taliban and winning the confidence of the Afghan people...one of the main objectives of the southern operation.

In Marjah on Tuesday, Afghan troops and Marines from the 1st and 2nd Battalion, 6th Marines Regiment finally managed to link up after more than a week of hard searches through insurgent fire and mined poppy fields.

"This is a very important step," said Lt. Col. Brian Christmas, commander of 1st Battalion, explaining that the linkup gives Nato forces control of a continuous north-to-south route through town and also hinders insurgents' ability to move freely.

Sporadic fighting continued on Tuesday as strongly entrenched Taliban units appeared to have regrouped in a heavily defended stronghold to the north. —AP

GLORY FOUND February 10, 2010 marked the conclusion of the Inquirer's nationwide search for Goyito. Nine lucky Goyito Wild Hunt winners have been chosen from among some one million promo entries. Present during the grand draw were, from left: Cebuana Lhuillier Regional Manager Fel Navarra, Golden Donuts, Inc. Product Manager Johanna Warren, Cebuana Lhuillier PR Manager Cheer Wee Ecarma, Inquirer President and CEO Sandy Prieto-Romualdez, Shangri-La's Mactan Resort Malaysia Director of Sales and Marketing Cathy Reamonicano, Shangri-La's Mactan Island Resort & Spa Cebu Media Consultant Loyzbee Tan, Inquirer SVP for Sales and Marketing Rene R. Reinoso, Inquirer VP for Advertising Paolo Olarte and Inquirer AVP and Marketing Director Jose Jaboneta.

SIKH STRIKE A Sikh shouts slogans against the Taliban and Pakistani government during Tuesday's strike by the Sikh community in Jammu, India. The strike took place after the decapitated bodies of two Sikhs were found a month after they were kidnapped in Pakistan's tribal region. —

Maoist rebel leader offers ceasefire, talks with India

NEW DELHI—A TOP MAOIST GUERRILLA leader in India has offered a ceasefire and talks with the government if it calls off a crackdown against the rebels.

The Indian government said it would consider the offer, but wants it in writing.

The offer made late Monday by Kishenji, a senior Maoist leader in eastern India, came days after the rebels killed 24 policemen in a brazen attack on a security camp in West Bengal state.

"Our revolutionary violence will stay on hold for as long as state terror is put on hold," Kishenji said in an interview to NDTV in the eastern state of Orissa.

If the government puts "violence on hold, not for 72 hours but for 72 days, then we will immediately stop our revolutionary violence," Kishenji said.

But would require the government to halt its Operation Green Hunt offensive—aimed at flushing the militants out of their forest hideouts—from Thursday until May 7.

Kishenji also called for "liberal intellectuals and human rights groups" to mediate talks between the rebels and the government.

In a press statement, Home Minister P. Chidambaram said he wanted the rebels to provide "a short, simple statement" before responding to their offer.

"I would like to 'fix' no 'hour' and no condition. Once I receive the statement, I shall consult the prime ministers and other colleagues and respond promptly," Chidambaram said.

Inspired by Chinese revolutionary leader Mao Zedong, the rebels have fought for more than four decades for land, housing and jobs for farmers and the poor. About 2,000 people—including police, militants and civilians—have been killed in the past few years.

The rebels, who have tapped into the rural poor's growing anger at being left out of the country's economic gains, are now present in 20 of the country's 28 states and have an estimated 10,000 to 15,000 fighters. —AP

Cheney hospitalized, resting comfortably

WASHINGTON—FORMER VICE PRESIDENT Dick Cheney was hospitalized after experiencing chest pains on Monday, an aide said.

Cheney assistant Peter Long issued a statement that the 69-year-old Cheney was resting comfortably at George Washington University Hospital and his doctors were evaluating the situation.

Cheney has a history of heart problems, including four heart attacks starting at age 37.

When doctors rule out an immediate heart attack, the next step is evaluating chest pain usually is an X-ray exam called an angiogram to help uncover the cause. Doctors inject a dye that will highlight narrowed areas on reading to the heart.

Blockages aren't the only explanation for chest pain. But Cheney had bypass surgery in 1988, as well as two later angioplasties to clear narrowed coronary arteries, and bypasses lead to last about a decade before the unnamed blood vessels start to clog.

In 2001, he had a special pacemaker implanted in his chest. In addition, doctors in 2000 corrected a normal rhythm in his heart with an electric shock. It was the second time in less than a year that Cheney had experienced and been treated for an atrial fibrillation, an abnormal rhythm involving the upper chambers of the heart. —AP

CLEARVIEW Indoor & Outdoor LED Wall Sales & Rentals BRAIN

Editor Raul G. Manuela ■ Assistant Editor Corrie S. Mariano

BUSINESS

Gov't raises $1.1B from Japan bond float

10-year debt paper fetches interest rate of 2.32%

By Bernard M. Domingo

THE GOVERNMENT YESTERDAY MADE A SUCCESSFUL return to the Japanese financial market as institutional investors bought 100 billion yen in samurai bonds, or about $1.1 billion at today's exchange rate.

Finance Secretary Margarito B. Teves said the 10-year issue fetched a coupon rate of 2.32 percent a year.

Buyers of the yen notes, called Shogun bonds in order to capture players mainly exclusively for institutional investors, have until March 2 to wrap up the purchase.

The Daiwa was arranged jointly by Daiwa Securities Capital Markets, Mitsubishi UFJ Securities and Nomura Securities and carried a partial guarantee from Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC).

An agreement with JBIC that the gov-

GOV'T B1

CURRENCIES

PESO-DOLLAR RATE

₱ 46.842 = $ 1

As of 5 p.m., Feb. 23, 2010

¥ 93.90 = $ 1

As of 5 p.m., Feb. 23, 2010

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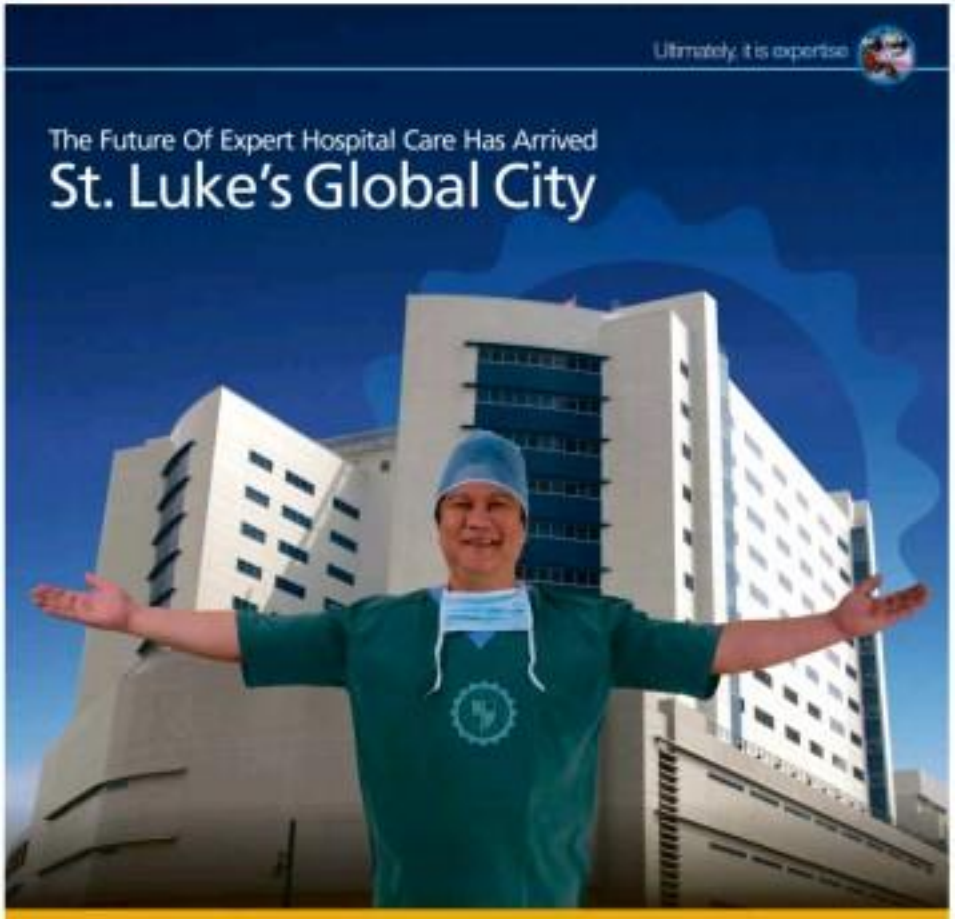

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Pag-IBIG seeks to refinance P7B in maturing obligations

P12B in 5-yr housing bonds to be issued on March 9

By Konrad M. Domingo

THE HOME DEVELOPMENT Mutual Fund or Pag-IBIG Fund will sell on March 9 up to P12 billion in housing bonds mainly to refinance maturing debts, Rio President Nelo de Castro said yesterday.

De Castro, who chairs the agency, said the latest planned issue would be Pag-IBIG's fifth and biggest so far.

Proceeds from the sale would be used mainly to refinance P7 billion in bonds that would mature in May.

"These bond issues have been very effective for (Pag-IBIG) in raising additional funds for our housing loan program," he discussed.

He said that in 2009, an average of 30% Pag-IBIG members had availed themselves of housing loans, or 1.2 million.

Last year, the agency released a total of P46-billion in housing loans to 74,000 members.

"We expect the number of borrowers to grow this year and in the coming years," he added. "Investments in the Pag-IBIG bonds will help us meet the demand for affordable housing loans."

According to Jaime S. Gabinbin, Pag-IBIG chief executive, the latest housing bond issue will have a life of five years and one day, and the coupon rate would be fixed but will be determined on auction day.

"Interest on the bonds are tax free because 10% debt payment has a full guarantee of the government through the Bases Conversion Development Authority," Gabinbin said.

The agency has also set aside P1 billion for the purchase of housing loans amounting to P1.475 billion funded by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the World Bank (WB)," a preliminary report of the Manila said.

Three programs include the $300-funded countercyclical support loan, development policy support program (subprogram III) , local government financing modernization program (subprogram 2) and governance in justice sector reform program (subprogram I).

The CBN program, funded by the WB, would embed local civic response program development and governance.

As for project loans, disbursements grew by 13 percent to $760 million from $700 million in 2008.

The ratio of actual disbursements to target disbursements for 2009 was placed at 99 percent, improving from 78 percent in the previous year.

As of the end of 2009, the country's CBN portfolio reached a total of $17 billion, covering 386 programs and projects.

Of these loans, 60 were already in progress at the start of 2009, 28 were finished within the year, four were started and finished, 35 were wanted and 259 were pipelined and nine is still to be made effective.

According to the Neda, the government has now availed itself of 86 percent of CBN funds earmarked for the Philippines, rising from a rate of 81 percent in 2008.

Also, the rate of actual disbursements to the net loan available during the year at most doubled to 42 percent from 22 percent the previous year.

Last year, the biggest sources of ODA was Japan, accounting for 36 percent of total CBN commitments.

The ADB was second with 22 percent, WB, 15 percent, China, 13 percent, while the rest represent a total of 35 percent.

In 2010, the government plans to avail itself of $1.46 billion in ODA for program loans and $761 million for project loans. Bernard W. Dominguez

Napocor eyes bond issue for SPUGs

By Jerry E. Bautista

CEBU CITY—STATE-OWNED National Power Corp. plans to issue local bonds within the first quarter of the year to raise about P15 billion mainly for its small power utilities group's capital expenditure requirements.

Napocor president Froilan A. Tampinco told reporters that the first issue is going to raise funds that would be used mainly to provide electricity in remote islands and far-flung areas through the SPUGs.

The company, he added, would be needing as much as P16 billion for its capital expenditure requirements this year, up from earlier estimates of about P10.5 billion.

SPUG provides electricity to remote islands and far-flung inland barangays that are not connected to any of the main grids. The government, through Napocor, subsidizes the rate of electricity in SPUG areas. Subsidy amounts to about P6.5 billion a year.

Tampinco said the bonds would have tenors of five and 10 years. They will be offered to the local market, he said.

Government documents showed that the SPUGs' 2010 capital expenditure budget would be partly used for the electrification of 37 barangays in Samar and Aklan through the mini-grid solar and diesel power projects.

Napocor also targets to acquire at least 35 249 kilowatt generation sets for Quezon, Isabela, Agusan, Cagayan, Nueva Ecija, Albay, Southern Cebu, Leyte (North), Surigao, Surigao del Sur, Sultan Kudarat, Bulacan del Norte and Tawi-Tawi.

The state-run firm will also acquire at least the 150 kW genset for Batanes, Quezon, Isabela, Cagayan, Palawan, Cebu, Leyte (South), Iloilo, Samar (West), Davao del Sur, Davao del Norte and Tawi-Tawi.

On top of these projects, Napocor will also be pursuing rural electrification projects in Mindoro.

Napocor-SPUG currently operates 309 generating units with a total capacity of about 229 megawatts (MW).

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
Intramuros Capitol Region
5/F DOLE Building, 357 Manila St.,
Manila, Manila

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S
FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s:

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National/Ownership	Position
JOSE MARIA TOUR OPERATIONS, INC. 1600 Roxas Blvd., cor. J. Bocobo St., Ermita, Manila	Pingping Li Chinese	Marketing Coordinator
ACE DOCUMENTATION SERVICES 1600 Roxas Blvd., cor. J. Bocobo St., Ermita, Manila	Gaojun Wang Chinese	Marketing Coordinator
WORLD TOP TOUR PHILIPPINES, INC. 1/F 1600 Roxas Blvd., J. Bocobo St., Ermita, Manila	Yuhuan Wang Chinese	Marketing Coordinator
MANDARIN ORIENTAL PHILIPPINES (MO) HOTEL Corner Ayala Ave., Dela Rosa and Legaspi Streets, Makati City, Metropolitan Manila City, Philippines	Alexander Maccioni Italian	General Manager/Executive Director/Officer/Managing Director
LEIGHTON CONTRACTORS (ASIA) LIMITED 11/F 111 Leighton Road, 3/F/Unit Nos. 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340,

MBC's 'favorites'

BEYOND WONDERING WHICH presidential candidate the country's "big business" community...represented by the Makati Business Club—is supporting should number no more.

In January, it hosted lunch for Sen. Benigno Aquino at the Rigodon ballroom of the Peninsula Hotel, where businessmen had to cue up to get it. Over a thousand showed up, by the looks of it. Most tellingly, the crowd nodded approbatively and clapped spontaneously at almost every other sentence Aquino uttered.

In contrast, a feisty MBC leased Sen. Manny Villar at the more modest Dusit Hotel, where even half of the ballroom remained in use by a divided—not difficult to fill. Of the 207 guests who showed up, 79 were part of Villar's staff or media entourage, according to the MBC staffer.

For the hare-and-tortoise drama of the second most popular presidentiable with MBC last week, they moved back to the upscale Rizal Intramuros ballroom. Kevin C. Lucas

BIZ BUZZ
By the staff

SGV chief retires

SAFE Balangue has quietly stepped down as chair of auditing giant SGV a few months after the broadside over the firm's controversial bonuses. Balangue's retirement from SGV—the auditor of many of the country's top listed companies...took effect last Feb. 1.

Whether this is a pre-arranged consequence of the controversial resignation of SGV ex-Isaza & Young or not is still the subject of much speculation. Balangue's retirement leaves managing partner Vic Noel as the firm's top honcho. Doris C. Bumilao

Brewing the market

REAL estate developer Globe Asiatique, which for some is most famous for building the Pinoy Big Brother house at "Bahay ni Kuya," is ready to leave the stock market through an initial public offering tentatively set for April.

It has tapped Banco de Oro as its financial consultant, which recommended that it set its offer price at between P6.50 and P7.0o a share.

Globe Asiatique founder and CEO Delfin Lee plans to sell 35 percent of the company's BENJO Jr.

PAL Holdings trims losses to ₱1.97B

PHILIPPINE AIR... [illegible] parent company returned to [illegible] in the first nine months of its fiscal year on the heels of cost-cutting measures and [illegible] made by the flag carrier.

In a disclosure earlier this week, PAL Holdings Inc., which also holds several companies that provide support services for the airline, said its losses fell to P1.97 billion as of December...or three quarters of the company's fiscal year that ends in March.

This was 86 percent lower than the P13.66 billion in losses the company incurred in the same nine-month period a year earlier.

The company's consolidated net loss [illegible] operations, which [illegible] peso gains on [illegible] from investments, likewise shrank 4 96 percent and drop to P93.4 million from P13.31 billion in the same period in 2008.

The latest [illegible] were despite an 11 percent revenue decline to P5.123 billion in the April-to-December period, thanks largely to lower [illegible] and cost-cutting measures adopted by PAL.

"For the period ended December 2009, fuel expenses declined by 32.2 percent as a result of the significant drop in average price per barrel of aviation fuel—from $102 in 2008 to $69 in 2009," the company said in its quarterly report.

Cost-cutting measures implemented by PAL in 2009 resulted in the reduction in passenger, [illegible] and [illegible] and general and administrative expenses, the company said.

The company said its consolidated expenses for the period decreased by P19.66 billion or 27 percent from the previous year's P71.76 billion. This was mainly due to lower expenses related to flying operations, down 40 percent; maintenance and [illegible] down 8 percent; general and administrative expenses, lower by 12 percent, and other expenses, down 73 percent.

Rodrigo Maniscilla

Meralco posts 169% surge in 2009 net profit to ₱7B

By Amy R. Borres

MANILA ELECTRIC CO., THE country's biggest power distributor, said its consolidated core net income surged 169 percent to ₱7 billion in 2009 from last year's ₱2.6 billion due largely to higher electricity sales.

"The year has produced outstanding results for Meralco across a range of metrics—profit, cash flow, debt profile and operating efficiency indicators," said Meralco chairman and CEO Manuel M. Lopez.

"We remain committed to deliver value to all stakeholders through core net income and revenue, capital management, and corporate governance equity," he added.

Meralco said in a statement that the improvement in profitability could be attributed to a slightly higher volume of energy sold and to an adjustment in distribution rates, which took effect in May 2009.

"Despite challenging economic circumstances, a modest growth was achieved in 2009 with combined energy sales of Meralco and Clark Electric Distribution Corp., a 60-percent owned subsidiary, registering a 1.7-percent growth at 27,318 gigawatt-hours (gWh)," Meralco said.

This was achieved despite the effect of Tropical Storm "Ondoy" which resulted in 66 gWh of foregone energy sales due to service outages for the last, including interruptions, distribution assets and customer connections.

According to the distribution utility, the residential and commercial sectors led the growth during the year.

While the industrial sector showed a decline, the volume sold in this sector improved slowly in the course of 2009 and in the recovery in energy consumption improved significantly toward the second half, the utility said.

"The growth in the residential consumption was propelled by customized investments, lower inflation and lower electricity prices. The service sector showed robust performance with retail trade and telecommunications growing 6.7 percent and 18.3 percent, respectively," it added.

Meralco said 2009 also saw self-generating customers returning to the grid to take advantage of the lower economic rates, contributing 257 gWh to the 2009 volume. The integration of Cambridge Industrial Park 2 (CIP2) in the Meralco distribution system also added 47 gWh to the 2009 sales volume.

Actual system loss was recorded at 8.61 percent, which, for the second consecutive year, stayed below the 9.5-percent cap imposed by the Energy Regulatory Commission.

"This is the lowest level recorded in the latest nine PBI. Accordingly, Meralco has no unrecoverable purchased power last year. Meralco's unprecedented achievement in system loss management is due to intensified detection efforts and the application of technology of metering facilities in pilferage-prone areas, and intensive campaigns, among others," Morales noted.

Trims systems loss to 8.61%

Stocks end lower on profit-taking

LOCAL STOCKS RETURNED TO THE DOLdrums yesterday, sympathizing with the sluggish Wall Street trading overnight as lower commodity prices dampened global investor sentiment.

The main share Philippine Stock Exchange index dropped by a marginal 0.08 percent or 2.45 points to close at 3,033.14 on mixed trading of major sectors.

Trading in the financial and services counters was upbeat but this was offset by the slump in the industrial, holding firms and mining/oil sectors.

Value turnover at the local bourse stood at ₱2.77 billion. There were only 37 advancers as against 68 decliners and 38 unchanged stocks.

The slight decline was brought by some profit-taking on Ayala Corp., Metro Pacific Investments Corp., Universal Robina Corp., First Philippine Holdings Corp. and Manila Corp.

On the other hand, those which hooked the downtrend were Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., Bank of the Philippine Islands and GMA 7 Holdings Inc.

Banco de Oro Unibank, SM Investments Corp., Globe Telecom and Ayala Land Inc. were likewise actively traded but their share prices were unchanged.

Meanwhile, 116 stocks ended a flat day session mixed as lower earnings and manipulation dragged down seven utility shares, overselling banking sector gains. Boris C. Bonilla

PhilWeb sees net profit of ₱1B in 2010

By Paola E. Mantaquila

UNITED GAMING FIRM PhilWeb Corp. remains confident it will reach its goal of posting as much as profit of ₱1 billion in 2010, or nearly double its net income last year.

In a statement yesterday, the Quezon-based gaming firm said recurs profit grew 89 percent to ₱95.1 million in 2009 on the back of stronger sales of the company's role as a technology partner of the state-run Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. (Pagcor).

"We expect to maintain the growth trajectory of our existing core businesses, and we have launched several new business, such as Pagcor's RouletPhil, that promises to deliver entirely new revenue streams," PhilWeb president Dennis Miles said.

"We are committed to deliver an equally dramatic result in 2010 as it sees a billion pesos in net income," Valdes said.

The company said it was also confident about its recent acquisition of furniture technology firm Aerotile GmbH, which will help the company tap the European and Middle Eastern gaming markets.

The company also said that government's efforts to develop a system to allow the public to make lottery bets using their mobile phones, which PhilWeb will be a part of, would help to create revenues.

"In this year promises to be a busy year as the company will expand internationally by providing legal gambling with government franchises through out the Asian region," Valdes said.

PhilWeb is the dominant player in the local internet gaming sector. As a technology provider of Pagcor, it operates the Pagcor e-Games web network, and Internet Sports Betting Station. PhilWeb is also the driving force behind the Bureau of Internal Revenue's popular Peryante.ph hotline program.

The company also offers business process outsourcing services in the casino industry, providing online casino management and operations to foreign principals.

Smart sees 2M broadband users in 2010

By Paola G. Mantaquila

DOMINANT CARRIER SMART Communications Inc. expects its internet subscriber base to more than double in number this year as broadband technology continues to push growth of the sector.

Smart chief wireless adviser Orlando B. Vea said declining rates and the growing popularity of Web applications like social networking would drive up demand for internet services in the country.

"Broadband will probably grow as a force run this year," Vea said. "[It'll probably have more than two million subscribers by yearend. In fact, that's on the low side."

If the goal is hit, it would mean a more than 100-percent increase over the company's current broadband subscriber base of one million people.

"The usage of internet is exploding like crazy," Vea said.

To illustrate the rapid growth of internet use in the country, Smart wireless division head Imelda Mojica said that the number of Filipinos on the social networking site Facebook grew from about 200,000 in 2008 to over 9 million at the end of last year.

"You can see that as a gauge for the propensity of Filipinos to adopt to the internet," Mojica said.

In preparing for the expected uptick in demand, the company said it would apply for additional broadband frequencies, specifically the country's remaining third generation (3G) allocation.

"We feel that as much bandwidth as possible because broadband is exploding not only here but every where else in the world," Vea said.

Biz Buzz

From page B1

shares to the public and wants international investors such as the Social Security System and the Government Service Insurance System to buy a good portion of the shares.

Lee lost high hopes for the IPO because the company ended 2009 with a profit of a little more than ₱500 million—at best in 15 years. Thea Arceo-Dimzon

Securing tenure

LAWYER CHUCK VALDEZ said Raul Bonoan has several more years to go as a member of the Bangko Sentral's policymaking Monetary Board, having been re-appointed for a new term only in late 2008. But it seems that he's not keen on finishing the last four years of his second term.

Our sources say that Bonoan—a trade undersecretary during the term of the late President Cory Aquino and one of the three lawyers in the Monetary Board—had indicated that he would like to retire soon. Bonoan, who is now in his early 60s, had told people he would like to rest and enjoy his retirement.

If Bonoan will indeed step down from the Monetary Board, the growing expectation is that he will do so as early as March to give room for President Arroyo to appoint a successor. Speculation is rife that Bohanoy won't look further in looking for a replacement and may simply appoint Trade Secretary Peter Favila—himself a former banker—to take over the unexpired term. Favila sits as an ex-officio Cabinet member. Anyway, who will have to give way when a new President is elected after May. Of course, taking over Bonoan's slot will change all that. Boris C. Bonilla

Gov't raises $1.1B from Japan bond float

From page B1

ceeded" the ¥100 billion yen.

He added that the amount represented the biggest yen bond issue made by even Japanese, Asian borrowers in Japan.

He also said that the Philippines topped the Japanese financial market's test in 2003 when ¥11.6 billion or 50 billion yen worth of bonds was sold directly to investors.

"The delegation promoted the strong credit story of the (Philippines), which was favorably received by bond investors," Teves said. "This allowed [us] to set the issue size at the maximum amount under the agreement with the pricing at the tighter end of the marketing range."

The finance chief said the funds raised "will be helpful in providing for the needs of our people and enabling us to achieve modest economic growth this year."

In January, the government raised $1.5 billion in dollar bonds through a global issue launched in the United States.

Teves added that the latest bond issue complements the government's planned foreign commercial borrowings of $1.5 billion for 2010.

He said the placement also represented the first JBIC-guaranteed commercial bond issue in 2010.

Firms show little interest in auction of sugar import rights

By Riza T. Dichoso

MANILA COMMERCIAL NEWS/GLOBALITE

INQUIRER

THE SUGAR DEVELOPMENT Council (SDC) on Tuesday said it received only 10 bids from companies interested in buying a total of 50,000 metric tons (MT) of sugar import rights in an auction held by the government.

The auction was held at the SDC office in Quezon City.

The bids received were for 10 lots of 5,000 MT each, SDC Executive Director Jose Antonio Gella said.

The minimum bid price was set at $1,000 per lot.

Gella said the SDC would announce the winning bidders on Wednesday.

The auction was held after the SDC failed to find buyers for the 50,000 MT of sugar import rights in a previous auction held on Feb. 12.

The SDC had set the minimum bid price at $1,000 per lot in the first auction, but no bids were received.

The SDC had offered the sugar import rights to help the country meet its commitments under the World Trade Organization (WTO).

The Philippines is a member of the WTO.

The sugar import rights auctioned off by the SDC are part of the country's minimum access volume (MAV) commitments to the WTO.

The MAV is the minimum amount of imports that a country must allow into its territory at a reduced tariff rate.

The Philippines' MAV commitments to the WTO for the 2009-2010 crop year (September to August) is 156,000 MT.

Of this amount, 50,000 MT is reserved for the private sector, while the remaining 106,000 MT is reserved for government-to-government importation.

The Philippines has already imported 106,000 MT of sugar under the government-to-government importation.

Gella said the SDC would hold another auction for the remaining 50,000 MT of sugar import rights.

He said the SDC would announce the schedule of the next auction on Wednesday.

Gella said the SDC would also ask the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) to lower the minimum bid price for the next auction.

He said the DTI would have the final say on the minimum bid price.

Gella said the SDC would also ask the DTI

Taking Workplace Safety to Another Level

Companies are encouraged to push their employees to take safety in the workplace a notch higher because unsafe behavior is generally considered as the major cause of workplace accidents. And while this is often mitigated under the right conditions, one challenge for responsible companies is to change habits and encourage employees to stop and think before carrying out a task. Bad habits can and should be prevented through a concerted effort by management, employees, and even suppliers and contractors.

With this in mind, CEMEX reaffirms its commitment to safety with the launch of a new campaign dubbed "Zero is Life," which targets zero accidents for the entirety of the company's existence.

"Zero is the only acceptable safety performance standard for us, and to an industry as dynamic as ours, we believe it is possible to create an accident-free environment," says Jaime Ruiz de Haro, CEMEX Asia President. "This is the reason why we are making intensified efforts at increasing everyone's awareness of, and improving everyone's commitment to safety," he adds.

"The 'Zero is Life' campaign is part of a comprehensive and continuing program to prevent injuries from occurring through best-practice sharing, training, learning and raising safety awareness among our employees, contractors, and visitors," explains Edwin Hofstein, VP for Commercial and Logistics.

CEMEX also has comprehensive health and safety management systems for ensuring that its operations are efficient and safe. These include leadership responsibilities, audits and inspections, training, risk assessment, incident investigation, contractor management, and safety driving seminars. "Zero is Life" is an attempt to integrate all of these safety measures into a campaign that everyone involved can take pride in.

"CEMEX believes that it is the right of every employee to go home safe at the end of each working day," says Ruiz de Haro. "'Zero is Life' is proof of our continuing commitment to promote, provide and achieve a safe and healthy work environment for employees and contractors at all times," he adds.

ZeroisLIFE™

"Zero is Life" means zero accidents for life. It stands for the target of zero accidents for all our people to ensure their safety on or off the job. It also means the continuous sharing of this value to friends and family.

The logo shows the numeral zero, which doubles as the unknown face of the individual protected when there are no accidents.

BUSINESS

MasterCard sees 5.1% growth for RP in 2010

But country needs to boost investments

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PHILIPPINE ECONOMY CAN BEAT forecasts and grow by as much as 5.1 percent this year, according to News Hedrick-Wong, an economic advisor for Asia-Pacific at MasterCard Worldwide.

Hedrick-Wong said the economy was poised to grow faster this year compared to last year's growth of only 0.9 percent, and even exceed government estimates of between 2.6 and 3.6 percent, because of improving global conditions.

As developed countries emerge from the worst economic crisis to decades, countries like the Philippines that depend on their performance would consequently grow.

Hedrick-Wong said, however, that it was imperative for the Philippines to boost investments over the next 10 years to keep up with the rest of the countries in the region.

He said the Philippines needed to get up the value chain as even the countries of sub-Saharan Africa would soon become competitors.

"The Philippines is facing an investment challenge," Hedrick-Wong said yesterday in an economic briefing.

He stressed that in the new global order mandated by the dominance of China, there was a need to boost investment spending to catch up with neighboring countries and tap new export opportunities.

"Turn them into your clients before they become your competitors," he said.

Hedrick-Wong said new investments were most needed in the rural areas, as these would perk up the agribusiness sector that provides jobs to 39 percent of the labor force.

By investing in rural infrastructure, he said rural incomes would quickly rise.

The economist also said there was indeed some scope for improvement to the investment grades on investors. One of closing businesses in the country, for example, should be lowered.

On corruption, he said he did not believe that corruption could be entirely eradicated before mustering new investments, noting that corruption exists even in advanced countries.

NEW BANK RISES
BPI Globe BanKo director Rizza Maringe Zata (right) goes over ceiling panels with Ayala Corp. CEO Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala. With them during the opening of the BPI Globe BanKo head office in Greenhills, San Juan is Bank of the Philippine Islands President Aurelio Montinola III.

BanKo offers banking technology to small lenders

BPI GLOBE BANKO, THE SUBSIDIARY unit of the Bank of the Philippine Islands, is offering its pioneering mobile banking platform to small lenders in an attempt to boost lending to the unserved and underserved parts.

"We want to be really not a retailer, but an enabler," BanKO president Teresita Tan said yesterday in a briefing after the inauguration of the bank's head office in Greenhills, San Juan.

BanKO relies on the financial services expertise of BPI and the wireless technology of Globe Telecom.

BPI and Globe Telecom each owns 40 percent of BanKO while another company, Ayala Corp. owns the remaining 20 percent.

The bank has an authorized capitalization of P500 million.

She said rural banks need not worry that BanKO would compete with them as the new bank would like to focus on wholesale lending to rural banks and helping them build up their capacity.

She said BanKO was working on a partnership with the Rural Bankers Association of the Philippines on microlending services.

If there's a rural bank or cooperative, for example, that could not grow due to lack of new funds, she said BanKO would come in and provide the money and technology. She said the bank could even provide liquidity management assistance.

"If they don't invest in something big because their funds are small, then our consolidate their funds," she said, adding that as part of its capacity-building services, its experts in treasury, compliance and risk management initiatives could work with the rural banks or cooperatives. *Doris C. Dumlao*

Exporters push for return of 'contingency list' in IPP

By Abigail L. Hu

EXPORTERS ARE SEEKING THE REINstatement of the "Contingency List" in this year's Investment Priorities Plan, saying they need the perks to fully recover from the effects of the global economic downturn.

In a position paper submitted to the Board of Investments, the Philippine Exporters Confederation said the Contingency List should be extended by another two years and renamed the "Export Recovery List."

The 2000 IPP Contingency List provided government incentives, tax deductions on labor expenses, and income tax breaks for enterprises that would employ job-saving measures or continue to invest amid the economic downturn.

For an enterprise to be qualified for the perks, it should either maintain or expand its workforce, while maintaining or increasing investments.

The draft 2010 IPP, however, no longer included the Contingency List, following the National Economic and Development Authority's declaration that the economic crisis has ended.

Rodito Bril, BOI managing head Elmer Hernandez said the Contingency List would likely be reinstated by another six months, depending on Neda's assessment of the economy.

Philexport said exporters failed to take advantage of the Contingency List last year, as they had to implement drastic measures just to stay afloat.

These included laying off workers, shortening workweeks, suspending operations and selling their products in the domestic market.

The group likewise said exporters could not meet the normalize packager's qualification requirement that they sell at least 70 percent of their products overseas, given the lack of orders from foreign buyers.

Apart from calling for the inclusion of the Contingency List to the 2010 IPP, Philexport also urged the BOI to suspend the 70 percent export requirement until 2013.

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MOTORING

Edsa Jong R. Arcano

Cold aircon facts

By Kenan Luo
Contributor

IT WILL BE ONE LONG, hot summer and all the indications of a furious El Niño punishment are there.

It's scorching hot outside nowadays and the temperature gauge in the instrument panel, dashboard, rear view mirror or wherever it is located in your car will tell you so.

The day time temperature is already reaching highs of 33 degrees Celsius and it's just the month of February! If you didn't hear or read the weatherman's forecast, a 40-degree scorcher is looming large.

No motorists, this means that the car's climate control or air conditioning system needs to be in tip-top shape all the time. It is therefore advised to check the air con system and be ready for breakdowns.

Here are some important tips to fix air con cars.

Adjust your belt

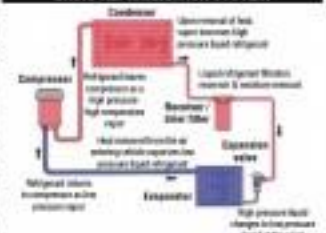
An air con compressor belt (let) is. The compressor is the single most expensive component in any air con system. What it does is to pressurize the refrigerant (which is more popularly known as "freon" so it will be able to do it's job. It is driven or powered by a "fan belt" (drive belt). It also has a magnetic clutch which allows the compressor to auto-matically shut off when the maximum cold temperature is reached. A loose belt will make the compressor less efficient and thus may result in longer (less necessary in order to maintain a certain temperature inside the passenger cabin. Keeping it properly adjusted will prevent that. Remember not to adjust it too tight through to avoid putting unnecessary strain on both the compressor and engine and wear out belt. This will lead to parts failure quickly.

Keep it clean

After leaving the compressor, the pressurized refrigerant passes through the condenser where heat is removed from it as outside air passes across the fins and tubes of the condenser. Here the high-pressure refrigerant vapor becomes a liquid under high pressure as heat is removed. Debris such as leaves, bugs, grit and mud can clog the condenser making it less efficient. Mud and other debris can also contain elements which may corrode your condenser tubes if left unchecked. Cleaning it of debris every so often will help make it last longer, work better and keep you cooler.

Change as needed

From the condenser, the flow makes a pit stop at the filter/drier where moisture or water and contaminants are sifted out of the refrigerant. It will need replacement eventually when the desiccant (small blue resinous moisture) becomes saturated and the filter gets clogged. Moisture in the refrigerant makes it less effective in removing heat and a clogged filter won't let much refrigerant pass through. Both bad news. Think of it as an oil filter for your air con system. You change the oil (filter when) you change the oil right? Doing so for your air con system every so often will make it last longer.



Keep your valves in check

The expansion valve takes care of regulating the flow of the refrigerant to your evaporator/cooling coil. The high pressure liquid is slowly regulated through the valve, allowing it to expand and drop in temperature. It's this cold refrigerant running through the system that absorbs heat from the surroundings and keeps us comfortably cool in our cars (and homes for that matter). This normally doesn't require frequent replacement especially if there's nothing wrong with the a/c but they do become clogged and fail eventually more quickly on valves you don't change your filter/drier as needed.

Stay away from sticky stuff

After the expansion valve, the low pressure vapor cold refrigerant passes through the evaporator (or cooling coil as the modern technicians call it) and absorbs heat from the air being blown across it. The amount of heat absorbed or air made cold is dependent on how much air is flowing across it. So like the condensers, the evaporator/cooling coil needs to be kept free from dust and debris and one way to ensure it is to keep out evens in the recirculate position.

Dust problems can be more difficult as just getting in and out of one brings a certain amount of dust. Getting the interior regularly vacuumed will help and so is avoiding air perfumer that have sticky residues on the interior. The residue will find its way to the evaporator, making it a dust magnet and clogging the evaporator which will not only require you to turn up the settings of your air con but lead to bad bad evening. The air con system is a sealed system and as such, contaminants can only get into the system when it's taken apart to be serviced either for leaks or cleaning of clogged cooling coils. Preventing the condenser and cooling coil from becoming clogged will allow the system to remain sealed and let the air con system work trouble free for maximum duration. Aside from saving us money it prevents the environment as well.

The author is the technical editor of Top Gear Magazine.

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TOYOTA

Multi-tasking behind the wheel

IS MULTITASKING BEHIND THE wheel—using a cell phone or any electronic device while driving—dangerous?

Many scientific studies conducted over the years show the dangers of talking or texting on the cell phone while driving, which is also often called distracted driving. Studies indicate that a driver using a cell phone is four times likelier to crash and that a drunk driver could outperform a person who is texting while driving. In the United States, per a Reuters article, researchers at Harvard University have estimated that drivers using cell phones cause 2,000 fatal crashes a year and 330,000 accidents that result in injuries ranging from cuts to serious.

Unfortunately in this Third World country, no studies have been done on the risks posed by distracted driving although Metro Manila is reputed to be the "texting capital" of the world. Some of the billions of pesos collected by the government annually for the Motor Vehicle User's Charge, a.k.a. the road user's charge, for road maintenance and safety projects should fund research on the dangers of multitasking while driving and form the basis for legislation thereon.

Banned

In the U.K., seven states have banned hand-held cell phone use for all drivers and 19 have banned texting for all drivers. The District of Columbia banned hand-held cell phones for drivers of all ages, although some have close to for seven ages. Research indicates that hands-free cell phone use while driving does not eliminate the risk.

The Associated Press reports that last month, the US Transportation Department and the independent, nonprofit National Safety Council organized a "Focus Driven" campaign whereby scores of volunteers will be briefed on the necessity persuading people to put their cell phones away while they are driving. Executed after the Workers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) campaigns, Focus-Driven will be held by a woman whose mother was killed in 2008 by a driver who was talking on his cell phone. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood wants to do everything he can to (1) to make people drive safer... without cell phones, without Bluetooth or blackberries. He said he believes FocusDriven can help raise awareness and change the way people think about distracted driving just like MADD changed attitudes about drunk driving.

Socialdrive buzz as capitol lards since the telecommunications industry has been enjoying all along that research on the dangers of distracted driving is inconclusive. For years, the industry fought regulations banning the use of cell phones while driving, even those requiring drivers to use hands-free devices. Safety advocates, researchers and families of crash victims criticized the industry's campaigns to educate drivers as paying lip service to the risks while studiously opposing a new generation of smarter, texting technology like GPS applications for smartphones such as the iPhone and Blackberry and wireless Internet access for cars.

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

Boom

Now the wireless companies are promising to do more, especially because of the boom in text messaging which they regard as a profitably-safe, one risk and which has led the CTIA, the industry's trade group, to support legislation banning texting while driving. The CTIA claims that it no longer opposes laws banning talking on phones while driving, instead is is neutral.

The years, writes Matt Richtel, author of "Driven to Distraction," the industry has marketed the virtues of cell phones to drivers, originally calling them car phones and enrolling them as useful access controls in advertisements. The industry succeeded in turning over motorists so much that in 2008, in revenue hit $148 billion in the U.S. In 2007, the US government estimated that 11 percent of drivers were talking on their phones at any given time.

These days, the industry focuses less on marketing car phones as make way for a new generation of devices for cars than for people do many miles or more. For example, a new mobile wireless service allows people in a car (hopefully not the driver) to use the Internet not just on phones, but also on computers.

Warnings

Some road safety advocates are urging the industry to place overt warnings on the packaging and screens of cell phones, just like health warnings on cigarette packages. But warnings have not really deterred people from using cigarettes. You people from using their cell phones while driving, Martin Cooper, a Motorola engineer who is considered the father of the cell phone for developing the first mobile telephone, had a lower idea: put a lock on the dial so that you can't dial while driving.

But that was back in the early 1980s when cell phones were big, heavy and primitive. A combination of strictly enforced legislation with penalties, education and campaigns like FocusDrive is needed now to reduce the incidence of distracted driving and its terrible consequences.

TODAY'S BUMPER STICKER: Ingles don't Suck.

Avon-equipped Ferrari rules Italian GT Hillclimb

AVON TIRES HAS ADDED THE Italian GT Hillclimb title to the list of European championships that has been won on its acclaimed racing rubber. Italian Ferrari 430 GT2 driver Dominy Zardo clinched the title with a round still to go, by winning the GT class of the recently concluded Maranello Course D'Asse. Zardo was 18th overall, five seconds ahead of chief rival and fellow Ferrari driver Leonardo Imfeld. "I am delighted to win the title, it has been a wonderful season and the car has performed well all year. Avon tires have handled perfectly on all surfaces and have certainly been a major benefit to my championship campaign, Avon's precision and a fantastic job and the tires really gave me the all important driving every race," states Zardo.

Exclusively distributed by Wheel Gallery, Avon tires are engineered to provide you with an improved level of performance and sophistication derived from racing technology. Avon supplies tyres to over 250 motor sports championships around the world, and has been at the forefront of formula's rich racing heritage for over 60 years.

It is also the preferred OEM tires of prestigious British automotive firms such as Rolls-Royce, Jaguar, Land Rover and Morgan.

For inquiries on how to experience Avon's superb engineering, visit Wheel Gallery at 2316 Executive Road cor. M. Paterno, San Juan or call 724-2739 or 726-0965 or log on to www.coscoguamdevelop.com. Avon is also available to select dealers nationwide.

Dominy Zardo on a Ferrari 430 GT2

Suzuki strengthens commitment to Philippine operations

SUZUKI PHILIPPINES, INC. (SPH), the country's only integrated automotive company, celebrated its 25th year in the country with simple ceremonies held at their head office and manufacturing plant at Laguna Technopark, Binan, Laguna on February 5. This was followed by a tree-planting activity and company outing on February 6.

Formally opening the anniversary festivities, SPH president Atsushi Uchida's congratulatory message reported employees to "improve more today, improve your job, so we can make Suzuki No. 1 in the world."

In the same vein, managing director Catalino Calderon presented the company's five-year goals, starting with the battle cry to "Double Up in 2011," its inspirational song entitled "Harana (Suzuki)" was launched to boost employee morale. Sung by in-house talents, the anthem will be played during company events to remind everyone of their commitment to a shared vision.

Employee awardees and service awards were also part of the anniversary celebrations, with SPH senior manager for import-export Rajeswaran Ganesalingam as the lone recipient for a 25-year service award.

To signal their long-term commitment to contribute to the Philippine economy, SPH partnered with the Haribon foundation in a tree-planting activity at Barangay Cuyambay, Tanay Rizal. Dubbed "Suzuki Plants", this activity symbolizes the company's vow of giving a gift that endures for a lifetime and makes a lasting difference for future generations. A company outing at Villa Lorenza, Pililla, Rizal capped the anniversary celebrations.

Suzuki motorcycles were first introduced in the Philippines in 1969 by Rafino D. Antonio & Associates, Inc., who handled nationwide distribution. In 1975, Suzuki Manila Corporation was formed as a joint venture between Suzuki Motor Corporation and Rafino Antonio. In 1986, Suzuki Motor Corporation of Japan took over operations, establishing Suzuki Philippines as a wholly-owned subsidiary, handling both manufacturing and distribution of Suzuki motorcycles.

In 1999, the company marked another milestone when it took over automobile operations from Philippine Transport Industries, Inc. (PTI), thus expanding its product line to include automobiles, and becoming the only integrated automotive manufacturing plant in the country, carrying a full range of two-wheel and four-wheel production lines.

In its 25-year history, SPH has built a heritage of trust and reliability with a loyal following of Suzuki owners who recognize the brand's evolution as an innovator and trendsetter.

With a commitment to contribute to the national economy, SPH exported its first batch of Philippine-made Suzuki motorcycles to Guatemala in 1999. In line with the government's programs to establish backward linkages with allied companies, SPH continues to expand its localization program, sourcing as much as 45 percent local components for its tricycle models.

Faced with the challenges of globalization and free trade allowing importation of low-cost motorcycles, SPH is adopting a growth strategy focused on increasing both the sales side and lifestyle segments. As the country continues to industrialize, Suzuki motorcycles will provide a safe, economical, convenient and fashionable means of transportation.

Suzuki automobiles enjoy a niche following among technology aficionados, and have earned accolades despite their relatively recent entry in the Philippine market. The Suzuki Celerio M/T gained the honors for Compact Car of the Year (CCOY) in the 2009 Top Gear Philippine Car of the Year Awards, while the Suzuki APV Type R was awarded the 2009 Best Compact People Carrier by CI Magazine.

SPH is committed to doing its share in accelerating the progress and industrialization of the country by introducing more dependable products for both motorcycles and automobiles as well as programs for the Filipino motoring public for securing the peace of Suzuki's Way of Life by providing them the best quality vehicles that offer more dependable products for both motorcycles and automobiles, but lifestyle options as well.

Jazz Helios Yellow keeps fun alive

HONDA CARS PHILIPPINES, Inc. lets the sunshine in with the Jazz Helios Yellow variant for introducing chic and refreshing colors in its line-up. Honda arrive in 2010 with a vibrant yellow color to bring out more fun to the Jazz.

Helios Yellow, exclusively available for the top of the line variant Jazz 1.5 V further boosts the sporty and youthful appeal of the country's Fun Utility Vehicle (FUV).

Widely acclaimed for its dynamic styling, spacious interiors, reliable quality and remarkable fuel economy, the 2nd generation Honda Jazz presents advanced and exhilarating features that deliver pure excitement to one's driving experience. The Honda Jazz is one smart car that is definitely not small in terms of space, features, performance, styling, packaging and most important of all, the Fun factor.

Backed with these attributes, the Jazz landed the other hatchback to the country and posted a 79 percent sales growth for 2009. Ever since its debut in 2003, overwhelming reception on the Honda Jazz has led to various accolades here and abroad. The Honda Jazz was awarded 2004 Best Engineering Solution during the 5th annual CI Awards. In Japan, both 1st and 2nd generation models won the much coveted Car of the Year Awards, covering year 2001-2002 and 2007-2008 respectively.

For non-stop fun, visit the award-winning, interactive microsite of Honda Jazz, www.hondajazzonline.com, to play around and learn more about the vehicle.

Two of the main highlights of the microsite are the Getaway and Jazzmazonia features. Getaway allows visitors to express their creativity as they get to design their very own graphic version of the Jazz. One gets to personalize the color, alloy wheels and sport an array of patterns of the car. With the Getaway feature, one can virtually dress up the Jazz in endless possibilities. Upon creation of the personalized Getaway, the graphic image of the Jazz will then be used to represent the visitor whenever he logs on to the microsite. Meanwhile, the Jazzmazonia feature lets visitors check the "eventful" of the Jazz by enabling them to configure the ULTRA seats to fit in term of terms.

Truly, the fun never stops at www.hondajazzonline.com. For that reason, the microsite has earned several recognitions in the world of cyberspace. During the 21st Philippine Advertising Congress in Subic, the Jazz website won the Silver Award Award under the digital campaign. It is also a recipient of the Interactive and Mobile Marketing Association of the Philippines' (IMMAP) Cyber Boomerang Bronze Award.

Visit any of Honda's 26 dealerships nationwide and say hello to 1.5 Jazz in Helios Yellow. Other exciting colors available for the Honda Jazz include Taffeta White, Crystal Black Pearl, Alabaster Silver Metallic (1.3 E only) and Polished Metal (1.5 V only). The Honda Jazz comes in three variants with the following prices: 1.3 E M/T 1,098,000; 1.3 Liter S MT 1,162,000; 1.5 Liter V AT 1,042,000.

HELIOS Yellow

TOYOTA Balintawak honors the men and women who for 20 years have remained steadfast to the company. They are Alfredo Tumaro, Eric Lee, Jocelyn Ngo, Zenaly Zuniega, Zenaida Meralit, Gina Lee, Renato Manalang, Maribeth Rongcal, Don Jose Miguel "Cesco" Olives, lenny Reginaldo Oliver, Lorna Villarosa, Ramona Fenelon, Apolinario Santos Jr., Wilma Navarro, Henrocio Ramos, Melgazar Dominguez, Ruth Diaz, Joseph Ang Tanseco, Sylvia Tan, Rolando Mallig, Alejandro Lazaro Aguirre, Julius Rodriguez Barrera, Vico Barrinuevo. The awarding ceremony was held at the Edsa Shangri-La Hotel in Mandaluyong City.

By Chyzele Medina
Contributor
Photos by Eugene Arevalo

IT ALL BEGINS WITH SATISFIED EMployees—that is Cesco Olives's mantra, one that has been inspired and validated by two decades of unparalleled performance in the management of Toyota Balintawak, Inc. (TBK).

Tyear before Cesco started working for TBK, the dealership company always had a healthy respect for the contribution of each and every employee, no matter if he (or she) were newly employed or someone senior rank. As a second-generation dealer principal, and having taken over most of the day-to-day management chores in 2004 from his father Reginaldo, Cesco believes in being open to all staff. "My door is open to anyone," he says.

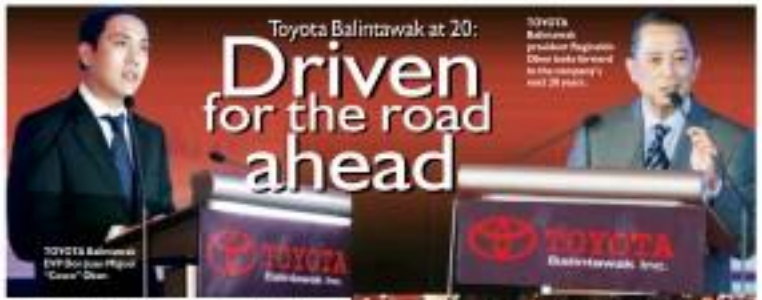
But more than this immediate passion, the institutions of open communication are well-entrenched in the dealership's management structure. "We have regular meetings in most levels of work," avers Rolly Mallig, the major office's general manager who had started to work for the company as a salesman when it opened its office and showroom in 1986.

TBK has set this bar for being one of the most professionally managed Toyota dealerships in the country, and this has augured well for the company. "This business is instrumental in helping ease the growing pains encountered with start-up years, in keeping a steady keel during the Asian financial crisis, or growing the business even in spite of intensified competition in the late 1990s not just from other Toyota dealerships but also by other motor vehicle brands, and recently, in holding its own against the onslaught of a global financial debacle that deeply scarred even the automotive industry.

Cesco and his staff of about 200 are understandably proud of having earned the prestigious Toyota Dealer Performance Award under the stringent Toyota Dealer Success Program (TDSP) four times: in 2004, 2006, 2008, and 2009. Prior to that, the dealership enjoyed recognition for winning four "Dealer of the Year" awards in successive years from 1991 to 1994.

Such programs that accord recognition to performing dealers have raised the standard of dealer operations in the country, and have become a strong competitive edge that supports the brand. "We are proud of our high quality of service to customers," says Mallig. A dealership, he adds, after all is not just about selling cars.

Toyota's dealer success program has undoubtedly helped TBK in gaining its customers' top-notch satisfaction. "To be given the Overall Dealer Performance Award, one must achieve winning grades in all five management areas of dealership: vehicle sales, finance & administration, parts, service and customer satisfaction," Cesco said, adding that this all goes back to the customers.



The recognition given by Toyota Motor Philippines, Inc. to TBK in each of these five management areas is credited to teamwork. Every earned skill derived from the dealer success program is applied by the TBK team in all its operations and services. Every-time-amazing/fail-customers-derive-a-truly-satisfying-experience-with-every-visit to a TBK branch.

No small wonder that TBK has grown to be one of the most successful Toyota dealerships in the Philippines. "There is a strong corporate culture in even it's a family-owned," says Danny Ilao, president of Lexus Manila, an affiliate of TMP.

Atty. Reginaldo Oliver, who founded the TBK dealership 20 years ago, has always been closely involved in the business, lets says. He sent his only son Cesco to pursue a degree in Business Management at the St. Mary's College in California. Promptly after graduating in 2000, Cesco was taken in as a management trainee at TBK to learn the ropes, moved up in positions of more responsibility as assistant vice president in 2002, and then executive vice president in 2004.

"This just shows how serious Mr. Oliver was when it came to managing Toyota Balintawak," Ilao adds.

Taking on the responsibility of bringing TBK forward through the next decades, Cesco is regarded by peers in the dealership industry as serious and level-headed. To his subordinates, even those as old as his father, Cesco is reported for keeping an open mind. No idea is too small, no view not worth listening to.

"When we set targets, they are never imposed. Instead, Mr. Oliver [also referring to Cesco] will engage us on how we may be able to meet a certain target," Mallig says. Cesco will listen to everyone, and only after carefully weighing all information will he give a decision.

Turning 30 is a milestone that is not to be taken lightly. For Toyota Balintawak, the future will bring new, even tougher, challenges. Cesco has enjoined his staff at TBK to join him in taking the next steps to bringing the dealership to greater heights. "We strive for even better customer service. We work our people even harder," added Cesco.

THE PEOPLE behind Toyota's strong performance in the Philippines [from left]: Raymund Rodriguez, 1st VP for Vehicle Sales, TMP; Ernesto Ikhani, chair, Standard Insurance; Reginaldo Oliver president, Toyota Balintawak; Michimitsu Sugata, president, TMP; Adrian Ty, chairman, TMP; Yuji Goto, EVP, TMP; Cesco Olives EVP Toyota Balintawak; and Sonny Guerrero, EVP, TMP

TOYOTA Balintawak's honored guests [from left]: Goji Hamamatsu, SVP for Financial Services, TMP; Yukiko Kouno, VP, TMP; Ms Patricia Chiu, president, Standard Insurance; Ms Margarita Olives Mallari Lua, EVP, Toyota Alabang; Daniel Ista, president, Lexus Manila; Philip Santos, Widescreen Marketing; Robert Lee, president, Winnerpass Marketing; and Cesco Olives EVP, Toyota Balintawak

NEW Toyota Motor Philippines present, Michimitsu Sugata (third from right) is joined by (from left) Jun Santos, VP and GM, Toyota Otis; Reginaldo Oliver, president, Toyota Balintawak; Adrian Ty, VP, TMP; Cesco Olives, EVP, Toyota Balintawak; and Yuji Goto, EVP, TMP

LAWYER Reginaldo Oliver (fourth from left) is flanked by Toyota Balintawak's 10-year awardees [from left]: Michel Pangilinan, Catherine Villanueva, Cristina Diem Huesmena, Ana Maria Teresa Olives-Reyes, Don Jose Miguel Olives, and Angela Lim

TWELVE-year's Top 10 sales awardees

FIFTEEN-year loyalty awardees [from left]: Catherine Tolentino, Ms. Lourdes Manuel, Enrique Santos, and Jovanie Bolintaos

TOYOTA Balintawak 5-year awardees [from left]: Catherine Garcia, Rowena delMundo, Ms. Charissa Cabangon, Gilbert Dagoni, Adriane Espiritu, Raymund Galindez, Michael Laguna, Cristina Manzanero, Tess Reyes, Marlon Benedict, Christian Orbeta, Rita Dia, Andrew Gonzales, Joey Tumolad, Emily Esteban, Ruzel Feriera, Paul Aaron Perry

Bulls of the Chicago Auto Show

By Ricci Uy
Photos by Kyle Mambuc
Sidtachi Uy

ALTHOUGH IT IS STILL TOO EARLY to have a final visitor count, the first weekend crowd looked strong and the American appetite for auto-sweets is for growing back. Here's a quick list of some of the highlights from the show.

Concept Cars—Hot hatches, race cars and green sedans

Chevrolet 95 Aveo—a hot hatch with a nice set of vanity flares

One of the attractions at the GM pavilion was the Aveo 95. This front-wheel driver 1.4 liter turbo four cylinder engine comes with flared fenders and a very aggressive looking set of 19-inch wheels. The car is something to look forward to in 2011.

Hyundai Blue Will—Harnessing Will power with solar energy

This delightfully aquatic-looking hybrid concept shows that Hyundai has been making great strides in technology with this compact four door, four-seater sedan concept that comes with a panoramic glass roof with solar cells for recharging its batteries, a thermal generator which converts hot exhaust gases into electricity, drive-by-wire steering and touch screen controls.

Hyundai Genesis Coupe—This built to exciting end

Hotness were rousted in a visual delight in this drift race-prepared Red Bull Genesis Coupe. Last year, Max Millen broke the Pike's Peak record with a heavily modified Genesis Coupe. This for Korean coupe is the sight of things to come in the American motorsports scene as Hyundai starts running with a third built o-back given their sublime marketing concept for the highly competitive sport of drift racing.

Jeep Luxury Party—All in the name 29

Mopar Underground's Jeep Luxury Party concept vehicle uses the Jeep Wrangler platform mated with an all new 3.7-liter HEMI V-6 engine and a Getrag 6-speed manual gearbox. Its massive 40-inch tires are mounted on 20-inch Mopar forged aluminum wheels. With such strong American rugged outdoor heritage as its brand values, we are not likely to see an Italian makeover for Jeep unlike its Chrysler sibling.

Chrysler Delta—Talking Italian

As the Chrysler Group is now under the control of Italian carmaker Fiat, it seems that they have begun grafting their genes and its Italian styling cues have begun to show its form in this concept car. Currently the third largest US carmaker is in the process of localizing some Fiat models for the US market.

Production Debuts and Milestones

Chevrolet Suburban turns 75

Chevrolet introduced the first Suburban model in 1935 and to commemorate its 75th production year, the 2010 75th Anniversary Diamond Edition Suburban was debuted in Chicago. Limited to 2,370 units, it costs up to $60,000 and has the premium LTZ package.

Mazda 2—Mazda's hot new hatch now in the UK market

Due to some not too common in the US market, total global sales of this model have already reached over 370,000 units. This stylish 5-door hatchback comes with a 1.5 liter four cylinder engine in Mazda's answer to a more fuel economy conscious US market.

Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG—Flying high with its Gullwings

Voted as one of the best looking classic sportscars in the world, the 1954 Mercedes-Benz 300SL "Gullwing" was used as a design inspiration for the new SLS AMG and is considered as one of the brand's most iconic designs. The US market will see the SLS AMG sell on the market around mid-year. Its 6.2-liter V-8 engine with a 7-speed dual clutch transaxle that propels the SLS from 0 to 60mph in 3.8 seconds. That's faster than you can spell out all the letters in SLS AMG.

Suzuki Celebrates its Centennial Year

Suzuki showcased its Waku concept car, its SX4, and a heavily customized Grand Vitara in this year's show. This year also coincided with Suzuki's 25th anniversary in the US market. It also showcased its flagship Kizashi 2010 model, an all-wheel drive sport sedan.

About the show

The Chicago Auto Show is considered the largest automotive show in continental America with over 1 million square feet of production, concept, and exotic vehicle exhibit space. The first show started in 1901 or it is also considered one of the oldest shows as well. The show was held from February 12-21, 2010.

Seaweeds eyed to power local cars

By Charles E. Bukot

SEAWEEDS—those slimy and otherwise unsightly plant-like organisms that are frequently washed ashore may be one of the country's last hopes to be less dependent on imported fuel.

Sen. Edgardo Angara, who chairs the Congressional Commission on Science, Technology and Engineering (Comstee) recently announced that his group is tying up with the Department of Science and Technology to partnership with the Korean government in installing seaweed biofuel cooperative ventures in the provinces of Ilocos, Quirino and Isabela in Luzon and Bohol in the Visayas.

If Korean firm has already developed a marine farm in Tolibon town in Bohol and and to jumpstart the project the same firm is planning to put up a US$100-million ($96.9 billion) facility for seaweed-based ethanol extraction, biodiesel power generation and organic fertilizer production.

Angara explained that unlike the ethanol derived from sugarcane or corn, seaweed-derived ethanol is cheaper to produce and much less is required to make the biofuel, making it an ideal candidate for large-scale production.

Ethanol is blended into automotive gasoline to increase octane rating and to reduce certain environmentally undesirable emissions from the automotive engines.

No pre-treatment

Unlike the ethanol derived from sugarcane or corn, seaweed-derived ethanol does not contain lignin that requires pre-treatment in the processing of sugar cane into consumable fuel. As a result no pre-treatment is needed before it can be turned into ethanol.

The resulting ethanol could be directly added to the gasoline used in cars without engine modification.

All modern mass-driven cars are certified to run on the most common blend of ethanol, called E10, which is about 90 percent gasoline and 10 percent ethanol by volume (SB), a much higher ethanol blend of about 85 percent ethanol and 15 percent gasoline, is only for vehicles specifically designated "flex fuel").

Cost efficient

Seaweed is proving to be more cost efficient and advantageous than other sources of biofuel like sugarcane and corn, which are currently the most popular sources of biofuels (by the way, biofuels are fuels derived from biological materials, which are renewable and more environment-friendly compared to those derived from petroleum or coal).

"But since every hectare used to cultivate these organisms or corn can also that could grow food—potentially creating food shortages and pushing up prices—there are strong objections to the use of food crops for the production of fuel," Angara said.

Indeed cultivating seaweeds is more practical as it grows much faster—up to 30 times faster than sugarcane—allowing up to six harvests per year.

Angara believes the use of seaweed as the new material for biofuel production is expected to draw support from local environmentalists, who recently criticized the use of land-based raw materials as having caused massive deforestation across the world's tropical forests.

Furthermore, he presented other collateral advantages of cultivating seaweeds:

- One of seaweed's close relatives is that many strains of the algae could be grown in salt water and thus, their cultivation is not politically sensitive as producing them do not encroach on lands used for food crops.
- Seaweeds do not require soil, and are already provided with all the water they need, a major advantage over land production of biofuels since water is the most limiting factor for most agricultural expansion, especially at times when there is a threat of water shortage like now.
- Seaweed derived ethanol shortly arrives from more carbon dioxide in the atmosphere and, thus, have greater contribution to climate change.
- Many biotech companies around the world are already working and have succeeded on using seaweeds to produce ethanol so far the progress here in the Philippines have plenty of resources as in which would be most viable here.

Useful byproducts

Angara said seaweeds have also many other useful byproducts, such as animal feed, fertilizer, soil conditioner and cosmetics (at present, the Philippines is the world top producer and exporter of processed seaweeds).

The former Agriculture secretary said "a mini agro-industrial complex could spring close to the seaweed farm like poultry and piggery farms, orchards and vegetable gardens, biopharmaceutical facilities and ecotourism destinations.

"This is a fertile source of livelihood and agri-business investments and the potential for sustaining and increasing many rural communities is both tremendous and tantalizing," he considered.

Partnership

Angara said the partnership aims to bring alive the Philippines signed in law Republic Act 9513 or the Philippine Renewable Energy Law in 2008 which he principally authored.

At the same time, a breakthrough came two years ago when the Korean Institute for Industrial Technology was able to find a way to find a way to extract ethanol from seaweeds.

However, its seaweeds have grown recently became it was calculated that less than three percent of the world's marine would be needed to fully use seaweeds as substitute for fossil fuels.

This is equivalent to about 30 percent of the land area that is currently used for agriculture.

"Indeed, the lowly seaweeds can help save the Philippines from the looming power shortage while helping develop the coastal communities by attracting investments for seafarming. This project with Korea is just the beginning of many more international ventures on green energy" Angara said.

THESE lowly and otherwise unsightly marine algae (by the way, seaweeds are cultivar plant not animal) would someday save us land dwellers who have to drive cars.

CATS' diesels finally out of the bag

By Tess R. Salazar

THE TRIPLE-POINTED STAR has officially joined the diesel-powered competition in the Philippines.

And it took a 1000-km autobahn-test drive (from Manila to Pili, Camarines Sur and back) dedicated to a summer weekend-long junket to break this news.

The convoy of six Mercedes Benzes entered from the Cats Motors Inc. dealership at the Fort in Taguig, 8th A Samoa for the south leading to the world-class Conduct Westinghouse Complex. This three-day trip, playfully called "Mercedes Capacities," involved automotive scribes saying not the Cats' lineup one after the other, each of which ranged in price from P2-million to P12-million.

Noticeably holding its own with its genuine powered counterparts in this furiously paced convoy were three diesel-powered Benzes. Cats Motors Inc.—general distributor of Mercedes-Benz, Chrysler, Jeep and Dodge in the Philippines—finally gave the green light for these diesels (particularly the six-cylinders) to enter locally after several years of unprecedented strength and mixed-fuel runs of its diesel engines.

Thousands of kilometers away, in German home, Daimler engineers also agreed that it was the right time for these diesels to pave land route in Philippine soil.

For some time now, Daimler had engaged the services of SGS (Societé Générale de Surveillance, which does inspection, verification, testing and certification of fuels, chemicals) to administer the type of diesel fuels being used locally.

Daimler was concerned about the compatibility of the Benz engine to take the kind of diesel used here. And after years of adjustments, modifications and sometimes improvements, it finally decided to field in its 6-cylinder diesel engines for "bad fuel" countries," equipped Cats Motors' VP for sales and planning Bobby Chua.

"The fuel compatibility tests that had been done for the 6-cylinder diesels were not only for the Philippine markets, but also for other 'bad fuel countries' like Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Cambodia," Chua added.

Wait's worth it

For the Benz enthusiasts who has been waiting for so long for the new Benz diesels, the wait is apparently worth it. For the copredecessor of driving the compact C220 CDI diesel, one would feel those German performance and fuel economy unpredictable Philippine road networks in mind when they designed the car.

Well, almost. Share revealed to this writer that this writer's engine had been taken apart periodically by Daimler engineers, the effects of the local diesels. And the fuel, of course would be studied and reported to Daimler headquarters, and then reassembled for another round of tests.

When this writer had her Cats at the wheel, the 1.8-liter C220 CDI, connected to an Audi A4 and with 24,000 km logged in, virtually showed no signs of being a guinea pig, but rather was all of a speed monster. Needless to say, it is equipped with one of the finest turbocharged plants in the world, producing a turbo-enhanced torque of 360Nm at 1,600-2,400rpm. The power of the 6-cylinder engine is channeled expertly by a 7-speed gearbox.

The catch here is that this golden monster won't have a sibling for sale soon in the Philippines. CATS might bring in a 6-cylinder version again for test purposes only soon.

Apparently, the C320 CDI's engine still might be "too good" for the quality of diesel fuels being used in the country. The fuel is, at blow cylinders, the sulfur content places engine rule in diminishing fuel quality—and consequently the feasibility of selling such a sophisticated piece of machinery.

Share said that as recently as two years ago, the sulfur content of diesel fuels in the Philippines was still a dizzingly high 550ppm (parts per million). In contrast, European countries touch as fast-running) were using diesel with only 50 ppm of sulfur. Today the diesel used in the Philippines has significantly reduced sulfur content of around 320 ppm, but there's still a far cry from a target of 50 ppm, let alone the 15 ppm the European region is targeting in the near future.

What's available now

But wait, isn't the feature about CATS being the diesel out of the bag? Okay, so forgot about the C320 CDI unless it's still running the mills in the CATS laboratory. What's out in the market for the diesel lovers is housed in 10.9 bodies: The GL 320 CDI (6-cyl-sized SUV) and the ML 350 CDI 4MIC Sport Utility (6-cyl SUV).

The GL is equipped with 7-speed automatic transmission (the "extra-ll" here is 7G-Tronic), and a host of safety features for the driver. Its dovetail-speed regulation, load-retaining system with 8 load-securing rings, electronic traction system for the permanent all-wheel drive, reversing camera, tire pressure loss warning, and even rear fog lamps. Its self-leveling Airmatic air suspension is responsible for a comfy ride. It's priced at nearly P7.6-million.

For ML 350 AMG Sport, though classified as a mid-sized SUV, offers the same engine displacement, power output, and fuel torque as the GL. SPECIAL ML enjoyment is in the body styling (and check out its 21-inch 5-spoke alloy wheels). Other than this, the ML 350 also has the 7-speed automatic transmission, an electronic traction system for all-wheel drive. All that for P6.2-million.

The hybrid at the center

Arguably the centerpiece of this mid-million-peso convoy would be the P11.8-million S400 BlueHybrid Long wheel and driven by no less than CATS' top man Felix Ang Jubo dictated for model drive no shall-fully see the next incoming gas.

The S400 BlueHybrid belong is supposedly the world's first mass-produced car with a 160-cm wheelbase and is certainly the first hybrid Mercedes. Mr. Ang, accompanied by his lovely wife Grace, certainly looked "starsky" inside the Silverbern Silver version of the sedan.

The "eco-ride" S Class (currently linked "big and powerful, and are anchored that not even a 280-page manual would suffice to fully explain all its features. But one image would suffice: When this writer got the chance to drive the S400, her back passengers (Ace Felix and Grace) were fast asleep, likely induced to such a state by the back massages.

To complete the cast, other Benzes in the convoy were the E350 4MIC Sport (belongs PP1,888 million), which features AMG body styling for a sportier appearance and greater emotional appeal to go along with its 3-liter, 90-engine, and a P1.880-million multipurpose E 350 Sport that was powered by a 3.5 liter 6V engine with a power output of 230Nm/2400-5600rpm.

Towards the drive back to Manila, the group stopped over at the Pendrecia's Tuyo garage near Naga, where a "business class" Benz has awaited for a brief inspection. Much as the morning, even the inspection of the car at back and enjoy the "special" amenities of this 20-some full-size bus (full reclining seats, a restroom and all), Mr. Ang waved us back in the cars. "Let's drive some more, guys." The leader of the brand, apparently tired, was looking for-ward to something else—to expedite the way he started it right behind the wheel.

CATS LOVE WATER. The usually reserved motoring media apparently walked some swimp after some water games at Lago de Oro.

SIGN AND DRIVE. Sky smiles his best as he signs the ground. CATS Motors president Felix Ang revealed his shoe size: 10 1/2-inches.

Formula Sports brings in Maserati, starts off with Quattroporte range

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

EVERYBODY WANTS CHEESE, including those shopping around for a sweet-but-pricy luxury sports vehicle.

And that is what Formula Sports Inc. presents the A-crowd following its recent appointment as the country's exclusive importer and distributor of lean, mean Maserati machines.

It didn't all the new and classic relationships between Maserati-based Maserati S.p.A and the Philippines, Formula Sports will bring in the latest models under the Maserati Quattroporte range that promise the best in both looks and performance.

Leading the pack is the new Quattroporte Sport GT S, which was conceived and developed as "a real driving machine in the guise of a luxury sedan."

Three main features set the Quattroporte Sport GT S apart from the rest in its small class.

1. It offers sporty handling through a suspension set-up that enhances its dynamic balance. This upgrade is from customers who demand an unparalleled handling of a thoroughbred sports car in a luxury sedan.

2. It features the latest in sporty automatic gear-shifting software, designed to win over committed and demanding drivers looking for an exciting driving experience.

3. It is equipped with a sports exhaust, which by means of a "sport" button, makes it possible to deploy the full power of the engine and produce a deep and clearly enhanced tone. Perfect for stirring attention of those vehicles and drivers around it.

All these mean that the Quattroporte Sport GT S comes with greater agility when cornering, improved stability and controlled speed when there's room for the ordinary-marked Maserati to gallop.

Buying is confident that with the features of the Quattroporte Sport GT S and other vehicles of the Quattroporte range (with prices ranging from P10.9 million and above; P12 million) Maserati will turn toward Maserati when buying a sports vehicle.

He believes that the time is right to more aggressively push the Maserati brand because buyers are hungry for an alternative, given that other brands have already been around for a while.

"We are going after that market that wants something else, who do not want to buy what everybody else is buying," explains Soong. "There are those who are saying, is there an elite high-end subdivision other than Forbes Park?"

Formula Sports has actually been distributing Maserati since 2003, but its operations were constrained by the fact that it was getting its spare from Singapore. That meant delays in delivery and some difficulties in pending marketing programs.

"We could not really take off because we got caught in layers of bureaucracy. It was like being asked to compete in a marathon, but we were given eight years to run. We passed it, but how can you run when you don't have the right support," explains Soong.

But with the signing of the new and exclusive distributorship agreement with the Modena office, Soong is confident that Formula Sports has all the support it needs to deliver Maserati to the hearts of those looking for a high-performance vehicle with the assured looks to match it.

Mitsubishi, BPI Direct tie up for 'Balik Bayani' program

MITSUBISHI MOTORS PHILIPPINES collaborated with Bank of the Philippine Islands (BPI-Direct) for the "Balik-Bayani" auto Financing program conceptualized to help Overseas Filipino Workers' avail a Mitsubishi vehicle in a much convenient and affordable way.

Recently, Sabre Motor which is Mitsubishi Motors Philippines' franchised dealer in Batangas, Cavite turned over a new Adventure GLS Sport to the Mr. Carlos Garcia, an overseas Filipino worker, working for Saudi Arabia for 16 years and hailing from the province of Batangas. Together with his wife, the couple was very excited to drive home their brand new AD-venturer. "We were surprised on how quick our application was processed and how fast our unit was delivered. We are overjoyed that we did not wait too long and on a lot of processing to have our first family car. Thanks to Mitsubishi...BPI Direct Balik-Bayani Auto Program for making owning a car easy for us. A Mitsubishi vehicle is definitely a perfect gift for my family," Garcia said.

With Mitsubishi Motors Philippines—BPI Direct Balik-Bayani Auto Program, OFWs who wish to avail any of the Mitsubishi vehicles can simply apply online by completely filling up the online application form at http://balik-bayani.mitsubishi-motors.com.ph/application.php; it, BPI Direct officer will coordinate with the OFW as soon as the application is received (application are received on real-time). The OFW simply needs to comply and provide all the requirements (completely filled-out online application form, Certificate of Employment, and 6 months latest proof of remittance to a beneficiary in the Philippines) to expedite the processing of their auto loan.

To know more about Mitsubishi—BPI Direct Balik-Bayani Auto Program just stay tuned or log on to http://balik-bayani.mitsubishi-motors.com.ph.

A CAR AT LAST. Tina Garcia couple with, from left, Ronja Neria of BPI Direct, Lina Valdez of Jubee Motor Corp., Rosemary Cruz of Mitsubishi Motors Philippines and Tristan Corral of BPI Direct

Beware of R-12 and R134a, they are hazardous to health

DICHLORODIFLUOROMETHANE IS SUCH a stumbling that someone decided to call it R-12 instead.

This one time magical chemical compound also employed as aerosol spray propellant used to be the lifeblood of all refrigeration systems, automotive air conditioning included, quickly fell out of favor at the rest of the world discovered that left unchecked in our atmosphere, R-12 would quickly depilate the ozone layer that protects us from the sun's harmful UV rays.

Thus after 1994 all car manufacturers worldwide agreed to use the more environment friendly 1,1,1,2-Tetrafluoroethane or what is more commonly known as R134a. To ensure that no one would continue using R-12 after mid-of warranty cars have long left the factory, car manufacturers used different fittings on the service ports of automotive air-con systems.

While they may be environmentally friendly, both R-12 and R134a, being gases heavier than air, aren't friendly to us humans and thus keeping away from these is recommended and inhalation of the compounds is ill-advised and fatal. Firman Lee

Make sure car aircon is CFC -12 (Freon) free

CFC 12 OR FREON IS AN ODOUR OR-phibing substance and the government is set for its total phase-out lessening axes importation by year 2010 since 80 is any of the 189 country signatories to the Montreal Protocol on the Protection of the Ozone Layer. Therefore, cars with year models 1995 and below still using CFC 12 will still be allowed to register until the phase-out year 2012. But under the DOTC-DENR Joint Administrative Order No. 3 series of 2006, all vehicles with model year 1999 or later should have the HFC-134a (R-134a or non-CFC) aircon system. Any vehicle under the said model years that still uses the Chlorofluorocarbon-12 (CFC-12), or also known as R-12 (or Freon) system shall not be allowed to renew its registration with the LTO unless its aircon system is retrofitted to a non-CFC system.

In RE the cleaning out of CFCs is ensured by DENR Administrative Order 2004-0 under Republic Act 6969 (Toxic Substances and Hazardous and Nuclear Waste Control Act). Most reputable specialty aircon shops are familiar with how to retrofit older cars using R-134a system. For more information, contact the DOTC-LTO office at tel. no. 921-9972 or contact DENR-EMB Philippine Ozone Desk - National CFC Phase-out Plan Project Management Unit at telephone numbers 928-4570 and telefax 426-6186. Alvin Ly

LIFESTYLE Parenting

The other members of your family

An animal hospital like no other is a pet owner's high-tech dream—but its four hotshot vets still know who's first in their books

By Alyn B. Honson
Contributor

BY WAY OF FULL DISCLOSURE, let me say: I love my vets. It's not just because my dogs are my children, and my vets are to me what pediatricians are to the most paranoid of mothers.

And it's not just because they thoroughly know their stuff: when I first took my dog Banana to their clinic five years ago because she wasn't eating, they did a thorough examination and an ultrasound, and had the problem (ingrowth and corrective surgery) scheduled within the hour.

It's because, over the years of looking over their shoulders, pestering them with early-morning phone calls, and meeting their wet families and pets, I've also gotten to know them a bit as people who really love what they do.

I'm not alone, too. Like their many clients, Dennis still get owners who spare no expense, to animal welfare groups for others they regularly do pro bono work. I was delighted when doctors Margie de la Rosa-Carpio, Mitk Carpio, Stefano Donato and Mike Vellagino, the four veterinarians behind the clinic Vets in Practice (VIP), finally moved from a cramped space in the two-story, 200-sq-m VIP Animal Hospital.

It opened last October in Mandaluyong, just a street away from their old location. "People were asking for more space," says Vellagino. "We would have 10 patients waiting in the consultation room, lined up on the stairs, and even waiting in the parking lot!"

Now, they have several consultation rooms, a grooming area, separate boarding facilities for 12 dogs and nine cats, and segregated sections for exotic animals and pets with infectious diseases—"with its own water supply and ventilation," Margie adds.

At the old VIP, they had introduced ImVetSys, a state-of-the-art blood chemistry and complete blood count (CBC) machine for animals, to the Philippines; now, they have ultrasounds, X-rays, dental instruments, vital signs monitors, access to a CT scan machine, and yes another first: completely computerized client records.

Donato, the resident orthopedics specialist who does a lot of bone surgery, is particularly proud of the "really clean, sterile surgical theater, where clients can view what goes on," he says, because believe it or not, some clients even take pictures while their pets are under the knife.

Another concession to the demands of their clientele: two suites, complete with air-conditioning and TV for a human guardian.

"We had that experience in the old clinic, when owners would stay with their pets in our reception area," Donato says. "I do recall seeing a Mexican hunky lying on a mattress in the reception area of the old clinic, an IV tube inserted in his leg—and you'd hear big bubble him. They camped out there for two weeks before the animal eventually died.

"Now we have this space for clients who are very attached to their pets, and who want privacy," says Donato. The cocker-hamster a video camera, through which a client abroad or at home can log-on to an IP site and see their pet.

Soon to open next door is an additional 280-sq m that will house a wellness center, with day care and boarding facilities and a rehabilitation center—a pet project of Margie, the resident alternative care expert, who incorporates natural treatments in their practice. She actually trained for an-

THE OTHER C2

COUNCILOR Jun-Jun Binay and Rep. Bongbong Marcos

EXIT: Tiaong Mayor JV Ejercito

BALLOY Aquino-Cruz, Kris Aquino-Yap and Pinky Aquino-Abadilla

DR. LOI Estrada, Atty. Mannix Aglugub, Jay Fong and presidential aspirant Joseph Estrada

NANCY Binay and her husband Pepito Angeles

MAKATI'S First Couple celebrates a joint birthday bash. Dr. Elenita Binay and Vice presidential aspirant, Mayor Jejomar Binay

Binays celebrate their birthdays in one musical night

DYNAMIC MAKATI MAYOR JEJOMAR "Jejo" Binay and his adorable wife Dr. Elenita "Elliot" Binay celebrated their natal anniversaries at the sprawling A. Venus Hall in downtown Makati, dahlings.

Starting with a little blues, lots and lots, together with tons of friends, celebrated the couple's birthdays on the same day.

"Of all the birthdays I've celebrated, this is the first time for me to see my friends from around the country huddle in one place together with my classmates from high school and even from my childhood," declared Makati chief executive, as emcees Bimo A. Punzo even traded them with his hit song "May Bukas Pa." Mayor Jojo, we bet, gamely sang the song with him.

"Silas Saigon" chanteuse Jessica Zendaña, who then belted a sultry rendition of "Sway" followed by Dr. Elliot's favorite song "I Still Believe."

After the 2004 Edsa Revolution, then President Gloria G. Aquino appointed Jojo acting mayor of Makati. He was the late president's first appointed local official. Jojo later won, on his own merit, the mayorship of Makati in 1988, and was re-elected in 1992 and 1995 and again in 2004 and 2007, palangges, affirming the great leadership he has shown in Makati.

"In the world many a new millennium, Jojo and Elliot see Makati not only as the national capital of trade and commerce, but also as center for information technology, a hub for Asian tourism, a beacon for culture and the arts as well as a leader in public services especially in services and to our citizens."

Mayor Jojo is gearing up to be the country's next vice president of former president Joseph Estrada in the May elections. The two are tagged as "the team to beat."

Ranking fourth in the Top 10 World Mayors Award in 2008, and first in Asia, Mayor Jejomar "Jojo" Binay is one Filipino leader that the country can truly boast of.

Call 899-8826 and 899-8854, e-mail or visit

Marriott Hotel Manila launches Velocity Sports Bar

The newly opened posh Marriott Hotel Manila launched the awesome Velocity that with a swinging cocktail bash, dahlings. "Velocity Bar is the first and one of the only five-star sports and entertainment bars in the country. Now, sports aficionados have a home-away-from-home to enjoy adrenaline-high events around the globe," said the vivacious Marriott hotel marketing communications manager, ms amiga Nikki Estrada.

It was a glittering success, dahlings. Judging from the numerous turnout of our town's upscale night owls. Guests sampled a wide variety of wines and cocktails. Executive Sheraton per formers dressed in Vegas-themed costumes welcomed each of us.

Guests can enjoy the game in the many bar area, in round-sex tables and couches, or in the dinners set-up area, where they can watch the game just like in a movie theater. A huge selection of draft beers and cocktails are complemented by an excellent menu in creative ways. "Sports enthusiasts around the country are invited to come and mingle forward sporting events and throw parties with friends who share the passion for sports," Nikki Estrada concluded.

The hotel definitely offers first-rate accommodations, and the two top floors house executive level rooms and 19 suites. "You can totally enjoy a spectacular view of the 18-hole Villamor golf course from the executive lounge.

Lastly, dahlings, Manila Marriott Hotel, along with over 3,300 Marriott-affiliated hotels worldwide, participate in Marriott Rewards. Call 988-9999 or visit www.marriottrewards.com/manila.

ELIZABETH Dingle, Aida Bisso and Mindy Meierwin

JOEY and Gina Lluvia, Gob Lauda and Maurice Lauda

AHHH! Binay Kiambiro, Mayor Jejomar Binay, Dr. Elenita Binay (4th from left), Jojo Lluvia, Mimin Binay and Bongie Angeles

SUSAN Sunga

MARRIOTT Hotel GM Richard Seal and Resorts World Manila EVP Peter Peeler

RESORTS World Manila president Kingson Sian, Megaworld's head of Commercial Division Kevin Tan and Solaire Sports' Wilson Fong

Lovi's Modern Vintage collection

Juxtaposing the past with Levi's present, the collection titled "Modern Vintage" adeptly connects the brand's authentic history to the inspiration of its new denim collection. And it also makes a nod-statement about the brand's relentless drive for "innovativeness" as the reason for its continued relevance among its tour of consumers, dahlings. During the Levi's launch, a new Philippine-wide campaign showed off to indispensable style endorser and renewed its leadership in jeans.

It's said the only brand that can truly claim to have an awesome archive. This collection shows the ingenious features of Levi's jeans from yesteryears.

"The collection and campaign were introduced to the Philippines last month to all Levi's stores nationwide. Its launch is one first offering to discriminating and fashion-forward Levi's fans this 2010," said Jess Atwood, marketing manager, Levi Strauss Philippines Inc.

Check out the Levi's Modern Vintage Collections, palanggas, available in all Original Levi's Stores and Premium Stores nationwide. Visit http://levistrauss.com.

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arrambe

Photos by Alex Vitt-Hagen's using **YKL** Photo Solutions

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MARRIOTT Hotel's Marketing Communications manager Michelle Garcia and Daniel Calderon

ATTRACTIVE Jocca de Leon and good-looking Daryn Hudson, Marriott Hotel F&B director

GINGER Duke and Investment Commissioner Jo Australia Ben Bray and Marriott Hotel executive chef Harry Cullinan

LEVI'S Marketing head Nonie Cabrutal

THINLINE PR manager Ivy Sevilla

LEVI'S Marketing manager Jes Jimenez

THINLINE president Frank Brinson wears a pair from Levi's Spring/Summer 2010 Collection.

The other members . . .

From page C1

and reiki and alternative care at the Heung Lin Animal Hospital in Bangkok in 2007.

Although the four vets also operated Avian and Care Specialists in Pembroke, Lilac, in 2005, and the Carrollton Veterinary Center at the Carrollton Pet Center in 2008, VIP has always been the flagship.

Bellagas and Donato had been classmates in vet med school at the De La Salle Araneta University, before Donato went to work and train at the Mount Pleasant Animal Hospital in Singapore; he later married Bellagas soon after.

But as long as the Philippines, the two built a busy home service practice. Soon, Mariga became a consultant of the Malion Mandaue Zoological Park, where Marga, a UP graduate, was the chief vet. She had worked at Manchester Animal Hospital in New York and Maryland Animal Hospital, and was trained in caring for exotic animals. Interdisciplinarily, they believe, both physicians, also know each other.

When Donato needed an extra hand for house calls, Mariga recommended her college classmate and future husband, Nick, who had worked in several California hospitals and at the Los Angeles County Dept. Vet, and was once head veterinarian of the Macau Veterinary Center. "By then we were doing surgery in a 60-sq.m. rented apartment," Donato recalls.

They eventually put up the first VIP as a four-way partnership in 2003.

The partners now have a combined 57 years of experience among them. While Dr. Nick is the joint guy and Mariga leans toward alternative remedies, Nick focuses on dentistry and feline medicine, while Willegas, before he retired recently from full-time practice to become a consultant, specialized in oncology and internal medicine.

"The pet industry has really grown, with pet insurance," Bellagas says. "The market is bigger now, and there are also more advocacies and pet organizations to help animals."

It's the love one, Donato adds, "as you have to catch up with pet owners, who are smarter and do their own research. Some of them would even consult a vet abroad."

Nick recalls how they were on the phone with a London vet who was amazed when an animal he had planned to put down was saved by Donato and Bellagas.

"The dog lived for another year, and the vet was amazed that we could perform such a sophisticated surgery in the Philippines."

"Clients have more money now, and are more informed," Mariga says—which is not to say that they only have rich clients, she adds. "Most are in the middle, although we have rich clients asking for checkups, and middle-level clients who will spend what's over it taken for their pets."

They offer every possible option, and don't hesitate to make professional bets for rescue and indigent cases, with each vet handling at least one pro bono patient a week.

"Many of our clients look at their pets as part of the family. And what do they give back to you in return? Companionship, loyalty, unconditional love, friendship. Some animals keep families together, and you can't replace that."

Kirk estimates that 95 percent of Filipino pet owners look at their pets as relatives, with whom they have a special connection. In fact, these scientists are big believers in the Filipino notion of *sagip*—a pet will absorb its owner's negativity or illness, even giving its life to save its human. "We can list on our diamonds when I have a stomach ache," Bellagas says. "Some people may think we're crazy, but that's what we believe—but you have to be a little crazy really to be a vet."

Crazy and terrible sometimes, especially since VIP is where other vets often refer their more advanced cases. "Going into the consultation, you take a deep breath and prepare yourself," says Donato. "You worry that it will be a big problem, and that they come to you hoping for a miracle."

Ask how they feel about being a parent, and there's actually a moment of silence during this otherwise animated interview.

"We know it's part of the grieving when the clients give space, and we respect it," says Mariga. "And we're grieving with them," Nick adds. "We're treating these animals because we want them to live."

Bellagas admits he sends farmers where, every 2 patient data. "We've been treating many of these patients since they were puppies and kittens, so you do feel a connection."

Mariga says, "You just have to look at yourself as a vessel. Sometimes you lose one and you're crushed, and then you get to save another, and you're filled again. You take all the joy and fulfillment you can from that."

On a lighter note, these guys have understandably seen everything. The number of exotic pet owners—that means snakes, tortoises, birds, hedgehogs—is growing, Donato says. "Before we'd see five a week; now it's more like five a day." Though he regularly handles big cats and crocodiles outside the clinic, a most memorable pa-

TIGER STORIES C2

R&R FOUR for the four-legged: Doctor's Marga de la Rosa Carpio, Mick Carpio, Mike Vallagas and Manuel Donato to the VIP surgical theater with rescue 'Rico' the dog and Tiger the DIC

What to look for in a vet

- GO WITH REFERRALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS...trusted search is best in this case.
- Does the vet give your dog or cat a thorough examination? If he or she doesn't even examine the mouth and asks you to hold the animal yourself, think twice," Dr. Nick Carpio says.
- Check out the services and facilities of the clinic.
- A vet who's dependable—when you can call any time.
- A thorough vet who's "honest," says Dr. Nielson Donato. "He should be willing to tell you if he doesn't know."
- The love gauge: "You must leave with all your questions answered, and a feeling of reassurance," says Dr. Marga Carpio.

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DOES the vet give your dog or cat a thorough examination?

The other members of your family

From page A3

more for Dennis was an obese Vietnamese pot-bellied pig that needed spaying. "I had to swim through layers of fat to find the uterus!"

"We've had owners feed their dog a whole baboon roasted a day, and still find the animal is underfed," Sellenger says. "And that's hand-fed." Manga interjects, "with the universal wearing a bib!"

With such memories to deal with in pet owners, veterinary medicine can be a pretty stressful field, "because you've got to deal with both the animal and the human," Sellenger says. The rewards, however, couldn't be simpler, Dennis concludes. "The only reward you need is to see your patient's tail wagging again."

Hours after the interview, Rish texts to remind me that the animals that posed with them for the shoot are Theo, an 18lb (young Persian), and Tiger, a domestic shorthair cat, both rescued animals who are now among the clinic's robust resident mascots. "So nice! Almost aka." Manga rests me minutes later. "We rarely get to talk about our practice and what it really means to us to be animal healers... Thanks!"

And that's why I love my vets.

UP Animal Hospital is at 60 Marvilo Circle corner Ross Ave., Alabang-Zapote Rd. 553-7965 and 5311583/82. Carvalho Veterinary Center is at Carvalho Pet Center, Ayala Ave. 5582695. Animal Care Specialist is at Pedestrian, Libis, Pasig, tel. 6356893.

Pet first-aid tips

+ CHOCOLATE HAVE TO BE? If you would feed for a human, fine and fat... are poisonous like theobro, bromhexa, have anti-metal, a pair of minutes and tweezers. However:...

+ ...never: anxious pets owner take because medicines Metacetamol. For example, can kill your cat, because it lacks the liver enzyme to metabolize the substance.

+ Never assume that what works for dogs will work for cats, and vice versa. This is especially true of shampoos and flea medication.

+ Sex. chocolate is really bad for your dog. It contains theobromine, which your dog cannot digest...and which can increase heart rate and lead to a heart attack.

+ Don't panic if your dog eats grass—it may be self-medicating an upset stomach.

+ Coprophagia, or eating its own feces, is a component of bonding in puppies—it has nothing else to play with, so get it a toy—as a nutritional deficiency, like bad dog food.

+ If you're not sure your dog has swallowed something toxic, feed it egg whites, which help keep the toxins from being absorbed, then contact your vet immediately.

+ Keep your vet's number posted on the refrigerator door or by the phone, and call for guidance. Dr Kitchen Internists says. If you're not sure what to do, don't do anything until you call.

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How to get kids to love reading

By Jaime Ramirez
Lifestyle

HOW CAN PARENTS, AND SCHOOLS, help kids increase reading skills so ensure their academic progress is not hampered?

There are certainly many methods, but as any avid, avid person will recommend, nothing beats simple reading a lot at the earliest possible age.

But first: How do students in the country rate in reading?

A look at the National Achievement Test (NAT) administered to public schools can shed some light. The Department of Education (DepEd) reports there has been a 11.36-percent increase in NAT results from 2006 to 2009. The 2009 NAT recorded a rise in Mean Percentage Score (MPS) of only 66.21 percent from 54.66 percent in 2006, which equates to an improvement of 11.67 percent.

The percentage gains seem to all subject areas and point to a steady improvement in the primary education of the country's public school system.

So what does this progress say about the reading skills of the country's students? It certainly speaks of a forward movement. But a 66.21 MPS (from 54.66 in 2006) is still a rather low score—to the Lit's only at the "near mastery level."

What's more alarming, namely it only at 19.4 percent among grade 6 students and 1.1 percent with 4th year high school students. That means below-mastery scores are a staggering 95.6 percent among the former and 98.1 percent among the latter.

In a 2005 interview, Dr. Yolanda Quijano, head of the DepEd's Bureau of Elementary Education, attributed "reading problems as the main culprit for the poor performance of some students in the NAT."

Dedicated subject

If a higher volume of reading and a head start will, in fact, make better readers of students, it would make perfect sense to dedicate a subject solely focused on reading comprehension starting in the elementary years.

However, in the current Philippine public school curricula for elementary and high school, reading (pagbasa) is just part of three other subjects—listening (pakikinig), speaking (pagsasalita) and writing (pagsusulat)—under English and Filipino.

Moreover, the two subjects have to fit itself from learning components into one three months.

It is worth noting from the English curriculum that the "daily period of 180 minutes is allowed for Grades 1&2. There is no increase in time allotment for Grades IV&V, because basic literacy skills are expected to have been developed in Grades 1&2."

In the Filipino curriculum, there is also no such increase in time allotted.

Less time

With the progressive reduction of class minutes, along with the fact that reading and pagbasa are combined with other subjects in one session, students now have less time to devote to improving their reading comprehension.

This seems to go contrary to the notion that more practice—hence, time—is needed to achieve mastery. Any expert or specialist is required to log in more hours to reach one's advanced mastery level. The same should be the case for something as important as reading comprehension.

A simple solution would be to reduce reading from the rest of the other subjects under English and Filipino, and give it a decent amount of daily time. Doing so increases a student's exposure to their books, which consequently means a wider breadth of knowledge.

This also means schools will have to provide more books to ensure students are always given fresh material to read and enjoy.

Tips for parents

What about the home? What can parents do to get their child into reading? Here are some tips:

1. Make sure your kids have access to a variety of reading materials.

Entice them to read by placing appealing books and magazines in their reading level in cars, bedrooms, toilets, family rooms, even by the TV. Make reading an important part of their lives. Ask them to read menus, medicine signs, directions, manuals, movie timelines, even cereal box reports.

2. Have the family reading time double as bonding time.

Set aside 15-30 minutes daily when everyone in the family reads. When your kids see you reading, this will inspire them to read as well. Also, regular reading aloud to children will lead to extensive gains in reading comprehension, grasp of vocabulary and the decoding of words.

3. Be aware of your children's progress and be on the lookout for reading problems.

Regularly check what reading skills they are expected to have at each grade level. Coordinate with the school's curriculum and check with teachers. Some kids are wired to overlook children's reading problems since they tend to see it as a group activity until they become serious and too late to fix. Ask your children if they can sound out words; see natural to identify unfamiliar words and check if they clearly understand what they read. Always read their report cards religiously on basic reading skills set and underlined tests.

4. Utilize various aids to assist your children.

Use textbooks, computer programs, audio tapes and whatever other materials are available. Games are especially useful. Any choice, because they allow children to have fun while they work on their reading skills.

5. Be enthusiastic with regard to your children's reading.

Remember, children look up to their parents for approval. Make sure to give them genuine and heartfelt praise for their efforts.

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LIFESTYLE Home&Entertaining

Bacolod home reflects the year's trend —exotic wood and sparkle of metals

DUAL tones of wood—kamagong—and white enhance the room's minimalist character when sunlight enters. The limited use of color enables the kamagong sectional console to take the foreground. CHRIS PEREZ

By Margie C. Enriquez
Correspondent

THE DECOR PULSE for 2010 shows the popularity of familiar designs that have emotional resonance with homeowners, reports the Financial Times Weekend.

These designs appreciate in time, the objects made warmth with an Oasis made from exotic hardwoods, and luxury, as in the texture of leather upholstery.

Worldwide, there's high demand for wood in a modern home.

Branded architect and furniture designer Bernabe "Bernie" Ibasco designed a minimalist home for a Negros Occidental businessman, that reflects the trend. But unlike the stereotyped tasteful box, Ibasco manipulating mirrors to happen within its four corners, this home holds character, here, out of handcrafted furniture, made of natural materials.

The shell is contemporary—simple white stunning expressiveness in the home's details and textures. White concrete walls and glass expanses are combined; the line is smooth, with accent walls and doors made of lavishly recycled woods.

As an element of surprise, the cabinet doors in the guest room are a layering of laminated banana leaves. The color palette is limited or is not to distract from the views of

MORE ON D2

Design must have warmth and emotional book

GARFIELD

A. UPPH

PUGAD BABOY

DICK TRACY

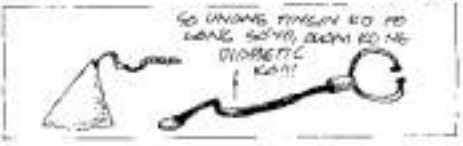
LOVEHOOTS

JAMES BOND

DRINK COMEDY

BABY BLUES

TULDOK



BEH

BIRD MACHINE

MARRIAN'S LAGOON

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS CORNET

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): It's easy to feel generous and sympathetic toward friends in need today, especially parents, but remain cautious. Sweet gatherings will be warm and fuzzy.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): You're in an upbeat, optimistic mood, and you're ready to get down and party today. You have the feeling that something better is around the corner. Don't be disappointed.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Your career manipulations slow down today. You easily will find ways to impress bosses, parents and VIPs, and in turn, this could lead to an increase in your earnings. Excellent!

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): The Moon continues to be in your sign today, making a lovely contrast to Sun, Venus and Mercury, which are in Pisces. This is a positive, refreshing day. Pamper yourself.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Mutual assets connect with the world today. You're pleased with how life is unfolding in general, and you're ready to celebrate. Invite friends over to your place, or go out and party with them.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): A female acquaintance could be a big help to you today. Don't be afraid to ask for favors. Be careful, however, that you don't overstep your boundaries. Be sensitive to the feelings of others.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Romance, vacations, teachers and other matters pertaining to philosophy and communication are highlighted today. Be open to new ideas, and don't be afraid to express your own opinions. In fact, professionally, originality is your greatest asset.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): You're working diligently today. You can't afford to waste time, and you don't. You're getting a lot done. This is a good day to handle business matters.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Some positive and heavy-duty influences are active in your chart today. You definitely will benefit from the assistance and support of others. Be appreciative.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): This is a wonderful day to socialize with others, especially partners and close friends. Even dealing with the general public are positive and optimistic!

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Something coming to an end with your job will not quite smoothly today. You can expect things for some reason. Logical issues, plans in good times with co-workers, too!

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): What a wonderful, creative day! You are in touch with your muse. Spells, creativity, playful activities with children, as well as romance and love affairs, are favored now. Enjoy your day!

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every row, every column, and every 3×3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. For more programs visit www.sudoku.com

Concepts Sudoku

			2	8	4			
	1					7		
5	6					8	4	
7							9	
6							5	
	8	5	9		1	3	2	
			3		5			
	3					1		
	4		1	9	7	2		

Difficulty level: ★★★

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

NEUTRAL light/seamless more saturated when the interior's color palette is restrained. Antique artifacts from Iloilo stand out against the black faux leather sectional sofa, woven leather armchair and low coffee table with steel legs.

THE BLACK IRON column, painted yellow, adds an industrial feel to the kitchen/dining area, surrounded by panels of exotic wood. In keeping with the modern look, the room's dining table is surrounded by warm-hued leather chairs.

Bacolod home reflects the year's trend . . .

From page B1

the gardens and swimming pool.

Relaxing ambience

Texture is achieved through lighting, the ambient flooring, Ilanot's furniture and ancient pottery from Iloilo or select pieces. There's no unnecessary clutter on the rooms here, reducing stressors.

Most of Ilanot's furniture designs are made of fine-grain narra and molave with their reddish tones, homegrong and dark tinged used for accent with their ebony color, laminated bamboo strips, fabric and steel. They have strong, masculine lines, innovative joinery, crafted by big, name furniture makers.

They are classic, reminiscent of the functional and monastic Shaker and Japanese styles, given a modern twist in terms of lines and proportion.

For instance, his rocking chair, made from old railroad ties, has low back and wider seat, lesser and narrower in back, unlike its predecessors which are high-backed and curvy.

The narra headboard in the guest room combines gently curving avanti inserted in vertical discs to achieve a woven effect.

MACOSCO14

THE FORM of the rocking chair, made from slats of salvaged wood, is reduced to its essence and eschews unnecessary detail.

SUBDUED finishes, lack of ornamentation, balance, function and durability are the hallmarks of Ilanot's designs. Narra and homegrong table is the epitome of this duo.

Bacolod home reflects the year's trend—exotic . . .

Pressage E3

Even the kitchen has a fresh look with classic touch: round table set against black neo-sofumes, painted in avocado, a glass cream color for the home.

In the dining room, little decor is needed since the navy dining set is strong in itself.

Also reflecting this year's trend is the sparkle of metals. Issues continues exotic steel legs on the coffee table and the fabric-upholstered armchair and hard-wood stools and chairs. Shiny metallic objects and finishes, says IT Medrosa, lend an element of sophisticability.

In all, the home style expresses the fusion of classic aesthetics, but tailored for quality materials and smooth finishes.

LAYERING of insulated banana leaves on the cabinetry imparts contemporary character and flamboyance to the guest room. Brown fabric armchair with stainless steel legs and black side table add pizzazz.

MIX'N MATTRESS headboard and bamboo and acacia night table

This messenger sees dead people

IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR A MEDIUM, someone who communicates with the dead, you may be interested in one of the men who deliver monthly bills of the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Company (PLDT).

My colleague Inter Digest found out recently about this guy's "supernatural" abilities when the unit running for the subway bet PLDT bill. A check with PLDT revealed that the January bill was received and signed for by "Atty. E. C. Dipanugal." Inter's father, who was a journalist and former presidential spokesman of the late President Ferdinand Marcos, has been residing in peace the past 24 years although the telephone number remains listed in his name. As this messenger must have extraordinary gifts to have gotten him to sign the delivery receipt.

As Inter said in her e-mail to PLDT, "I am also curious to find out how my father was able to receive the billing notice on Jan. 8, 2010 since he has been dead for the past 24 years. Maybe the LBC courier (PLDT bills apparently are delivered through the LBC courier service) brought the bill all the way to heaven, because, where he is buried and he most likely materialized as a ghost to accept it."

This is not the first time Inter has complained to PLDT about non-receipt of her bill. Naturally, if clients do not get their bills, they are unable to pay them on time. People do not like receiving if bills have arrived. They will only be made aware of the problem when the next bill comes or when they are served a notice of disconnection.

Inter said, "Last year, I got my PLDT bill (after 15 calls to customer service, all of which I recorded faithfully) three months late, with matching notices of disconnection. Of course, PLDT blamed the courier service. I said, well, their courier's name is either Dilad, Angkas or Lalamove? I also lived in the same house, on the same street, with the same neighbors for 42 years now. I, surely, (The courier) can read and says we are also in Deal the house. (although I don't know why not, unless he is blind) he could have asked around (as he must be a messenger). It he does not know how to read.

Adding insult to injury, Inter says the courier has no difficulty finding their house when it is Christmas time to refund the deposit. Inter said, "I also told PLDT that I found it ironic that they could easily cut off the services of a client in good standing—and they can check their records how family has been a PLDT client since 1955—collect their PLDT bills from the courier, but cannot find the same courier to deliver the bill to the same address."

THE CONSUMER
Linda B. Bohol

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PROMO PERIOD: JANUARY 11 APRIL 10, 2010
A. PURCHASE REQUIREMENTS
1) Visit any participating Jollibee outlet/s and/or branch/es and purchase the required number of EQ packs such as EQ Plus, EQ Duos and EQ Trio in an amount/s together with any redeeming information (name, address, contact number/s, e-mail address if any, birthdate and your date's name and birthday) EQ Box with purchase stated on the receipt/s.
2) You can submit your entry/ies through a) Jollibee Party Wishes, box b) mailing an entry/ies consisting of a) Jollibee Party Wishes, box b) mailing, and/or c) e-mail to EQ Customer Service Office, 21st Floor Jollibee Plaza Building, Emerald Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City 1605.
3) Only one (1) entry per Jollibee Party Wishes, Box, Mail-11, Mr. Alvarez Avenue, Mandaluyong Metro Manila (Jollibee employees), Calamba, Mandaue City, Cebu, EQ-21 and Jollibee Mandaluyong Inc. (JOL) Mandaluyong Metro Manila (Jollibee employees), Cagayan De Oro City, EQ-21.
4) Only 1 (ONE) ENTRY PER CUSTOMER in any of the following EQ packs:

EQ PACKS (Party Combos)	No. of Prizes Required
EQ Jollibee Party Pack (Plus)	1
EQ Jollibee Burger Treat (Plus)	1
EQ Jollibee Party Pack (Plus, Duo, Trio)	1
EQ Party Pack (Duo)	2
EQ Party Burger Treat (Duo, Trio, Tres Trio)	2
EQ Party Pack (Trio)	3
EQ Party Pack (Tres Trio)	3

5) Each entry will receive one (1) Jollibee Birthday Party Certificate worth Seven Thousand Pesos (P7,000) and one (1) Birthday Party Treats Certificate worth One Thousand Pesos (P1,000).
6) Valid entry/ies/coupon will be accepted.
7) Entry containing invalid receipt/s (improper, unreasonable with dates or void), illegible, incomplete, or mutilated will be deemed invalid and will be disqualified.
8) Winner/s is/are entitled to receive one (1) Jollibee Birthday Party Certificate worth One Thousand Pesos (P1,000) and one (1) Birthday Party Treats Certificate worth One Thousand Pesos (P1,000).
B. PRIZES
Each winner will receive one (1) Jollibee Birthday Party Certificate worth Seven Thousand Pesos (P7,000) and one (1) Birthday Party Treats Certificate worth One Thousand Pesos (P1,000).
C. GRAND RAFFLE DRAW
1) Grand Raffle Draw will be held on the 3rd week of May 2010, Tenth Floor, South Tower, Ortigas Center, Pasig City.
2) You are required to keep your entries within the store premises in case raffle draw is held in the store. Winner/s is/are required to be present during the Grand Raffle Draw. Winner/s is/are entitled to receive one (1) Jollibee Birthday Party Certificate worth One Thousand Pesos (P1,000) and one (1) Birthday Party Treats Certificate worth One Thousand Pesos (P1,000).
3) Grand Raffle Draw will be witnessed by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) representative.
4) All entries will be drawn at the following EQ Offices at exactly 2PM and will be attended by JOL staff:

Date	Location
February 11, 2010	Jollibee Plaza, Emerald Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City
March 11, 2010	Jollibee Plaza, Emerald Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City
April 10, 2010	Jollibee Plaza, Emerald Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City

5) For the 1st Grand Raffle Draw, all entries will be collected through a) JOLLIBEE PLAZA, Emerald Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City, Metro Manila (Jollibee employees), b) For Visayas entries - JC Commercial, Inc. Mandaue City, Cebu (Jollibee employees), c) For Mindanao entries - JG Summit Olefins Corporation, Cagayan De Oro City (Jollibee employees).
6) For the 2nd Grand Raffle Draw, all entries will be collected through a) JOLLIBEE PLAZA, Emerald Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City, Metro Manila (Jollibee employees), b) For Visayas entries - JC Commercial, Inc. Mandaue City, Cebu (Jollibee employees), c) For Mindanao entries - JG Summit Olefins Corporation, Cagayan De Oro City (Jollibee employees).
D. CLEARING OF PRIZES
1) Winner/s is/are to call the Monthly Draws and Grand Draw with an announcement in the Philippine Daily Inquirer.
2) Winner/s will be notified within 48 hours after the draw through a) HOTLINE 09 and c) e-mail and will be addressed to their house address through JOL courier service partner.
3) Winner/s can claim their Jollibee Birthday Party Certificate from March 15, 2010 to September 30, 2010 at any JOL Office and their Raffle Draw Certificate from January 15, 2010 to December 31, 2010 at any JOL Office and their Grand Raffle Draw Certificate from May 15, 2010 to December 31, 2010 at any JOL Office. Winner/s is/are required to present their valid ID and sign the claim voucher.
4) Winner/s will be asked to present their valid claim stub and 2 valid IDs (e.g., Passport, Driver's License, Company ID, Student ID, Barangay ID, SSS ID, GSIS ID, Postal ID, Voter's ID, Philhealth ID, Pag-ibig ID, Alien Certificate of Registration, Police Clearance, Seaman's Book, Firearm's License, Professional Regulation Commission ID, Overseas Workers Welfare Administration ID, Integrated Bar of the Philippines ID, Senior Citizen ID, Philippine Postal ID, Philippine Identification Card, Philippine Identification System ID, Philippine Overseas Employment Administration ID, Philippine Ports Authority Seafarer's Identification and Record Book, Social Security System Number, Tax Identification Number, Unified Multi-Purpose ID, Philippine Passport, Philippine Seaman's Book, Philippine Seafarer's Identification and Record Book, Philippine Seaman's Identification Document, Philippine Seafarer's Identification Document, Philippine Seaman's Identification Card, Philippine Seafarer's Identification Card

ENTERTAINMENT

Lira Soriano-G. Velarde

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OVERHEARD

"AMERICAN IDOL" DIVA DROUGHARD on fellow judge Ellen Degeneres, a first-timer on the panel: "Ellen brings a sense of humor, of course. But I also think she knows more about music than she thinks she does."

New angles

Charice Pempengco

NOW IN HER BEDROOM in her new house in Tagaytay, we expect a Gibson electric guitar. She needed very little prodding to pick it up... strum a few chords... and pretty soon, she was grooving from Jesus, a loud rock tune. We took a minute to collect our jaw from the nearest floor.

"I was given this as a gift when I visited India," she said of the guitar. "It's just learning mighty it."

On another occasion, after doing media interviews at the penthouse of a Quezon City hotel, Charice walked up to a baby grand in one corner of the room. She announced, "This is the only song I can play." It was the Abba's "Dancing Queen."

It seems Charice, barely 18, is not slowing around for new things to learn.

"I didn't know how to vocalize, but now I do," said the Pinay international singing sensation whose watchit, It's Yours, has worked with Steve Hindley, Chaka Khan and the "High School Musical" cast.

Noah Gonzaga-Jose

Jolo

THIS IS THE ARTIST formerly known as Jolina Magdangal, reinvented and rediscovered. Again. Jolo (French for "pretty") just came out with a magazine of her own that redefined (yet again) the word "multi-tasking" for the actress-singer-entrepreneur. We, remember her clothing line?

Jolo the woman is executive editor of Jolo the mag. And we don't know about surrending leaves, but for the first one she is also cover girl, main fashion model (as in this mag) at right by Jake Verzosa; there are 16 full pages of Jolo's, plus travel features section. And photographer for "Venice Without Elliot" in the Voyage section.

"This is not just about me," the mama in the editorial: yes, she does that, too—"but about all modern women... and the things that interest us most." Whoa, girl, that's a big label!

Ima Soriano-G. Velarde

Triumph for two imports

By Rayzel San Diego Jr.

THE X FACTOR COULD HAVE spelled the difference.

Sarah Lahbati and Steven Silva were not the only finalists, but they emerged winners on the ONE-7 reality talent fill "Starstruck 3" at the Rizals held Tuesday at the Big Dome.

Sarah and Steven beat celebrities Jennifer Diva Montalbo, Rocco Nacino and Enzo Pineda.

What did it for Sarah and Steven? Concert member and TV5 stage director Floy Quintos believes the indefinable "X factor linked to" towards the end.

"That was what Steven had working for him ... a sense of being totally at ease," Quintos explained. "On the other hand, Diva is more talented, but sing-physicy, charm and old-style glamour were the night for Sarah."

In an interview with the host, Sarah said her "talent" helped her clinch the title Ultimate Female Survivor. "People saw how hard I worked," she said.

For his part, Steven pointed out, "I never took anything for granted."

Although they're not privy to Lahbati's TV, he's 23, Sarah and Steven have many questions in

SARAH and Steven were not early front-runners, but they worked "very hard."

A 'Supper' star is born, and he's thrilled

RANDOM COMEDIAN JOEY PARAS JR HE answers questions like a Miss U winner.

It's because he can't contain his excitement, now that his movie, "Last Supper No. 2," last year's first Film in the Cinemalaya fest, will finally have a week-long run at Ayala Malls Trinoma starting today.

"I'm elated and thankful that a small movie will see the light of our hard work," he says, apologizing for speaking like a beauty queen.

Bigger campaign talents were initially considered for the role of Wilson Sarthana, the kind, slightly naive, scheming production assistant who gets entangled in a protracted misadventure.

Director Veronica Velasco considers herself extremely lucky to have found Paras, who previously made waves as Didi, the show-stopping soloist in the stage production of "Kinsay Zarzuwela Zo Manila."

Velasco acknowledges that Joey's portrayal contributed so much to the film. He up preached the role with intelligence and attention to detail."

Paras is equally grateful to Velasco and the rest of the "Supper" team. He regards Velasco

JOEY Paras with his 2009 Active Best Actor Award

as "my film mentor, passionate and tough. She's iron lilies!"

In playing Wilson, Paras made sure to veer him into a stereotyped gay. "He good, nice to people—simple yet moving. I studied Wilson as himself. After two days, we became friends. I learned the true value of humility and hard work from Wilson," he points out.

Wilson is glad that makeovers show he discovered Paras after "Supper."

"I hope more people will notice Joey. He didn't take the usual route to success for most comedians. His theater background gives him a definite edge," says the director.

A 'Supper' star is born . . .

Pretyuguse 81

With Sarah Geronimo

Triumphs for two . . .

Pretyuguse 81

STEVEN Silva: "I never took anything for granted."

FLOY Quintos: "It... Xavier birthed it."

Red-letter day for Callalily fans

Top 10 films at the US box office

	Title	Gross	Wks
1	Shutter Island	$40.0 M	(1)
2	Valentine's Day	$17.2 M	(1)
3	Avatar	$16.2 M	(4)
4	Percy Jackson & The Lightning Thief	$13.2 M	(2)
5	The Wolfman	$10.8 M	(2)
6	Crazy, Stupid, Love.	$7.5 M	(3)
7	Dear John	$4.6 M	(5)
8	Youth in Revolt	$4.0 M	(2)
9	Crazy Heart	$3.5 M	(6)
10	Everybody Wants Some	$2.9 M	(1)
11	Edge of Darkness	$2.7 M	(3)

CALLALILY will hold a grand fans' day on Feb. 28, 3 p.m. at SM North Edsa Entertainment Plaza. Lead vocalist Kean Cipriano, who's been visible on TV lately as one of the judges on the ABS-CBN morning show "Umagang, sayo ako kano" day will include a live performance of songs from Callalily's past albums as well as its current self-titled release.

Bring a copy of Callalily CDs or buy its new albums at the venue to gain entry to the event.

To download Callalily's ringback tones, ringtones and full track music from the new album, text Sony to 3456.

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MOVIEWORLD

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GALLERIA

1 PERCY JACKSON & OLYMPIANS / THE WOLFMAN
2 FROM PARIS WITH LOVE
3 ARMORED
4 INFESTATION
5 MISS YOU LIKE CRAZY
6 AVATAR (Digital 3D)
7 PLIABLE
8 IT'S COMPLICATED
9 LAST SUPPER NO. 3
10 MISS YOU LIKE CRAZY

MANILA

1 MISS YOU LIKE CRAZY
2 FROM PARIS WITH LOVE
3 ARMORED
4 INFESTATION
5 IT'S COMPLICATED
6 VALENTINE'S DAY / MISS YOU LIKE CRAZY
7 PERCY JACKSON & OLYMPIANS / THE WOLFMAN

METRO EAST

1 MISS YOU LIKE CRAZY
2 FROM PARIS WITH LOVE
3 ARMORED
4 INFESTATION
5 PLIABLE / VALENTINE'S DAY
6 IT'S COMPLICATED
7 PERCY JACKSON & OLYMPIANS / THE WOLFMAN
8 MISS YOU LIKE CRAZY

NOVALICHES

1 MISS YOU LIKE CRAZY
2 ARMORED
3 PERCY JACKSON & OLYMPIANS / THE LIGHTNING THIEF
4 INFESTATION

FORUM ROBINSONS

1 MISS YOU LIKE CRAZY
2 FROM PARIS WITH LOVE
3 ARMORED
4 IT'S COMPLICATED

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MOVIEWORLD

STA. ROSA

1 PERCY JACKSON & OLYMPIANS / THE LIGHTNING THIEF
2 THE WOLFMAN
3 LEGION
4 CASE 39

LIPA

1 PERCY JACKSON & OLYMPIANS / THE LIGHTNING THIEF
2 THE WOLFMAN
3 LEGION
4 CIRQUE DU FREAK: VAMPIRE'S ASSISTANT

DASMARIÑAS

1 MISS YOU LIKE CRAZY
2 FROM PARIS WITH LOVE
3 ARMORED
4 PERCY JACKSON & OLYMPIANS / THE LIGHTNING THIEF

STARMILLS

1 MISS YOU LIKE CRAZY
2 FROM PARIS WITH LOVE
3 ARMORED
4 PERCY JACKSON & OLYMPIANS / THE LIGHTNING THIEF
5 THE WOLFMAN
6 LOVE HAPPENS

IMUS

1 MISS YOU LIKE CRAZY
2 FROM PARIS WITH LOVE
3 ARMORED
4 PERCY JACKSON & OLYMPIANS / THE LIGHTNING THIEF

ANGELES

1 MISS YOU LIKE CRAZY
2 FROM PARIS WITH LOVE
3 ARMORED
4 PERCY JACKSON & OLYMPIANS / THE LIGHTNING THIEF

TACLOBAN

1 MISS YOU LIKE CRAZY
2 SHERLOCK HOLMES
3 PERCY JACKSON & OLYMPIANS / THE LIGHTNING THIEF

DUMAGUETE

1 MISS YOU LIKE CRAZY
2 CIRQUE DU FREAK: VAMPIRE'S ASSISTANT
3 PERCY JACKSON & OLYMPIANS / THE LIGHTNING THIEF

BACOLOD

1 MISS YOU LIKE CRAZY
2 ARMORED
3 THE BLIND SIDE
4 LOVE HAPPENS
5 PERCY JACKSON & OLYMPIANS / THE LIGHTNING THIEF
6 VALENTINE'S DAY

ILOILO

1 MISS YOU LIKE CRAZY
2 ARMORED
3 THE BLIND SIDE
4 LOVE HAPPENS
5 PERCY JACKSON & OLYMPIANS / THE LIGHTNING THIEF
6 VALENTINE'S DAY

GENSAN

1 MISS YOU LIKE CRAZY
2 THE IMAGINARIUM OF DR. PARNASSUS
3 VALENTINE'S DAY
4 THE WOLFMAN

ILOCOS NORTE (NOW OPEN!)

1 MISS YOU LIKE CRAZY
2 THE BLIND SIDE
3 THE MESSENGER 3: THE SCARECROW

FEATURED FILM of the week

NOW SHOWING at Robinsons Movieworld Cubao Indoor

MOVIEWORLD

Opening Today

Miss You Like Crazy

Directed by Cathy Garcia-Molina, stars John Lloyd Cruz, Sea Alonzo, Maricar Reyes, Sid Lucero, Noel Trinidad and Ina Feleo

Sleep man (Cruz) falls for his polar opposite, hobby girl (Alonzo), when he was abroad. Problem is, he's already committed to another woman (Reyes). Director Molina promises that this rom-com offers "tears-inducing moments."

Last Supper No. 3

Directed by Veronica Velasco; stars Joey Paras, Avel Lorenzo, Audrey Rimes, Beverly Salvaleja, Dobrodiy Tubosoto and Maricel Soriano

After completing a "Last Supper" tapestry, an amateur production designer (Paras) gets entangled in an erotic case and gets lost in the maze-like judicial system. Next Film release in last year's Cinemalaya received raves from critics, including filmmaker Joel Lamangan who wrote in the beginning: "An intelligent, satirical comedy that doesn't ... resort to slapstick. " To decide why or for this, see Velasco's Gallery.

It's Complicated

Directed by Nancy Meyers; stars Meryl Streep, Alec Baldwin, Steve Martin, Lake Bell and John Krasinski

Divorced couple (Streep, Baldwin) found themselves cheating on their current partners after rekindling their romance. Daily Express' Alex Watts praises Streep as "feisty and believable" and Baldwin as "charismatic." Los Angeles Times' Betsy Sharkey calls it the director's "thinnest slice of ironic relationship angst."

MERYL Streep

Infestation

Directed by Kyle Rankin; stars Chris Marquette, Dresdan Sevin, Linda Park, Wesley Thompson, Kinsey Packard and E. Quinn Shaw

Slacker (Marquette) must fight off hordes of giant insects that turn people into instant scrambled eggs (Sci-Fi Movie Night). James O'Riley commends in "fun parody setups and pretty decent production values" (InsideHorrorCom). Del Sandy notes: "The kid version of yourself would be really, really satisfied."

From Paris With Love

Directed by Pierre Morel; stars John Travolta, Jonathan Rhys Meyers, Richard Durden and Kasia Smutniak

Inexperienced agent (Meyers) gets paired with narcotic-trigger happy partner (Travolta) in the CIA. Del Accomando's review in Fresno (Del Ju Morning News) lists (illustrated says it's "more like watching a video game than a movie." Chicago Tribune's Michael Phillips compares it to "a crime-laugh-on appear."

Armored

Directed by Nimrod Antal; stars Matt Dillon, Laurence Fishburne, Skeet Ulrich, Jean Reno, Fred Ward and Columbus Short

Neophyte guard (Short) is promoted by co-workers to steal what they were assigned to protect: a truck filled with a million dollars. New York Times' A.O. Scott criticizes it up as "an ear-disturbed B movie: "basic, brutal ... clumsy." Dr. Inside Scottish's Roger Moore likens it to a "factory film ... heads with a) recycled script and grab bag cast."

Plastik

Directed by Argyll Joseph; stars Mon Confiado, Ms. Isabel Lopez, Pen Medina, Jao Mapa, Alwyn Pascual, Jordan Castillo and Shaleb

Abused as a child, Vincent (Confiado) grows up into a cross-dressing serial killer who preys on hookers. Character actor Confiado, who usually plays macho men onscreen, gets star against type as a troubled transsexual.

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9 ARMORED
10

SHANG CINEPLEX
1 MISS YOU LIKE CRAZY
2 IT'S COMPLICATED
3 ARMORED
4 VALENTINE'S DAY
PEARL JACKSON
FROM PARIS WITH LOVE

POWER PLANT
CINEMA

When love 'triangle' is an understatement

THEY ONCE FOUGHT COMMITTED HOOKS: a gay love pentagram.

Thinky Actor broke up with Gay Boss. Excited because of Showbiz buddies.

Nope, G wasn't the third party in the sordid affair, but the one who informed GB about RAs extracurricular activities, particularly moonlighting assistant with Rosette Cop.

One uncle says G is still sore at BG for stealing the love of his life, Science Grad.

Feisty and furious

Speaking of furious guys: Weston Montagu is spewing venom against Handsome Robot, who has joined the horse stable of MM's mom, Cove Actor.

YM is upset because RA is getting all the breaks, while GA is currently jobless. To climb, DA beat HR in a competition in their younger years.

RUSHES

Male model, though, that HA has better work habits ... and reputation.

Feisty and furious 2

Seems VM will fight tooth and nail for his, uh, mards. At a show last week, HM was overheard complaining because his besotted Talent (and alleged lover) was now in a blink and you'll miss him role.

SM huffed and puffed, and guess what? It worked! IT was recently awarded with a high-profile project.

Gimmicky tandem flops

Former brown binders just earned a nasty reputation for being publicity hungry.

Male Half of the ensemble love team upstaged co-stars in a new show and bugged the limelight at an event. Female Half retooled attributes to dreadnose her flagging career. Sadly, these tactics proved boomerangs.

MH and HS will use anything and anyone for a few IN sound bytes.

Too late the hero

Remember Top Writer who quit from Major Network because he was treated shabbily?

MW's latest infraction was that it failed to give just rewards for a concept that TW cooked up. Hm, a Network Executive banned TW from shows after a misunderstanding.

A Higher Officer tried to relieve TW, who said, "No, thanks."

Top of the talk shows

For those who missed last weekend's jubilees on IN (and why are we not surprised, if we're honest.)

• Richard Gomez on why he still lives in Greenhills while claiming to be a year-long resident in Ormoc: "Walang sinabi si Ormoc. Walang IN' na yun," Eh.)

• Melai Cantiveros, asked that she and Jason Francisco kiss on air: "Hindi naman halik lang kasi, Mayroon naman kayo." (Good answer.)

• Ankiba Ang Aangal's message to people who made hurtful comments on her new look: "Thanks ha pa ring mag-thank you kay Lord. Sanlyo ninyo ang yong mga sinasabi niyo, ang sakim sakitin niyo pa rin ako." (Good answer for us.)

• Sam Milby, on alleged fight with Anne Curtis on a secondary outing show set: "Kung counter 'you I don't need to [say] but we are okay.' TBut are OK. Sino, let's hear from Anne, sinoll ava?!

• Anne's reaction: "Kung si Sam para kaming sa? para singit ... multiply ang kaming magsumpukan [but] ang okay kami." (Confusing, ha?)

• Kris Aquino on what she learned after that hard fall in the shower: "[Wag na lang na.] Hindi Gravy Pilitis (Gerald, The Icon, Showbiz Central)